

A Comparison of the Fables  
Contained in La Fontaine, Marie  
De France, and the Collections  
known as Isopet I, Isopet II,  
Isopet de Lyon

by Rara Margaret Benn

*July, 1908*

Submitted to the Department of Romance  
Languages and Literature of the University  
of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

Master Thesis

French

Benn, Rara 1908

"A comparison of the fables  
contained in La Fontaine,  
Marie De France, and the  
collections known as Isopet  
1, Isopet 11, Isopet De Lyon."



A COMPARISON OF THE FABLES CONTAINED IN LA FONTAINE  
MARIE DE FRANCE, AND THE COLLECTIONS KNOWN AS ISOPET I,  
ISOPET II, ISOPET DE LYON.

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE  
DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH FOR THE  
DEGREE, MASTER OF ARTS.

Thesis  
1908  
Benn  
c.1

Rara Benn, July, 1908.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY,

Les Grands Écrivains de la France,

Oeuvres de J de la Fontaine, par M. Henri Regnier, Paris, 1883

Volumes I, II, III.

Fables Inédites des XII<sup>e</sup>, XIII<sup>e</sup>, et XIV<sup>e</sup>, siècles et  
Fables de La Fontaine,

A. C. M. Robert, Vol. I, II. Paris, 1827.

Lyoner Yzopet, Wendelin Foerster, Paris, 1825.

Poésies de Marie de France, B. de Roquefort,  
Vol. II. Paris, 1820.

La Fontaine et les Fabulistes, M. Saint-Marc, Girardin,  
Vol. I, II. Paris 1867.

Marie de France et les Fables au Moyen Age, M. A. Joly,  
Caen, 1863.

Histoire de J de la Fontaine, C. A. Walckenaer,  
Vol. I, II. Paris, 1838.

La Fontaine et ses Fables, H. Taine, Paris, 1895.

Langue et Littérature Française, P de Julleville,  
Vol. II, p. 1-13. Paris, 1896.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Les Grands Écrivains de la France. Oeuvres de Jean de La Fontaine par M. Henri Regnier. Volumes I, II, III Paris 1883

Fables Inédites des XII<sup>e</sup>, XIII<sup>e</sup>, et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles et Fables de La Fontaine. A. C. M. Robert. Vol. I, II. Paris 1827.

Lyoner Yzopet. Wendelin Foerster. Paris 1825.

Poésies de Marie de France . B. de Roquefort. Vol. II. Paris 1820.

La Fontaine et les Fabulistes. M. Saint-Marc de Girardin Vol. I, II. Paris 1867.

Histoire de Jean de La Fontaine. C.A. Walckenaer. Vol. I, II. Paris 1858.

La Fontaine et ses Fables. H. Taine. Paris. 1895.

Langue et Littérature Française. P. de Julleville. Vol. II. pp. 1-13. Paris 1896.

Littérature Française. G. Lanson. p. 549-558. Paris 1898.

The Comedies of Terence and the Fables of Phaedrus. p. 365-471. Henry Thomas Riley. London 1906.

Marie de France et les Fables au Moyen Age. M.A. JOLY. Caen 1863.

Littérature Française, G. Lauson,

549-558

Paris, 1898.

The Comedies of Terence and the Fables of Phaldrus,

p. 365-471,

Henry Thomas Riley, London, 1906.

A COMPARISON OF THE FABLES CONTAINED IN LA FONTAINE  
MARIE DE FRANCE AND THE COLLECTIONS ISOPET I, ISOPET II,  
AND THE ISOPETI DE LYON.

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH  
FOR THE DEGREE, MASTER OF  
ARTS.

RARA BENN, JULY, 1908.

A Comparison of the fables contained in La Fontaine, Marie de France and the collections of fables Isopet I, Isopet II and Isopet de Lyon to determine ~~(II)~~ their literary value and ~~(II)~~ to show ~~(II)~~ the changes in the fables due to the rank and profession of the writer, the customs and beliefs of his century.

The literature of the middle ages is very rich in collections of fables, known as Isopets. The best of these are: the Isopet of Marie de France, the Isopet de Lyon and the Isopets published by Robert as Isopet I and Isopet II. We shall consider first, the little which is positively known of the writers of each of the collections.

(A). Marie de France belongs probably to the last half of the XIIth century. Our information concerning her is very meager. In the epilogue to her fables she says:

Marie ai num, si sui de France.

And she mentions some 'comte Willaume' over whose identity many scholars have argued and have come to no plausible conclusion. She is mentioned as a contemporary by Denis Pyramus a writer of the middle ages about whom equally little is known. "Mais quand nous pensons arriver a une date certaine on nous renvoie de Pyramus a Marie et de Marie a Pyramus." From a few references in her poems, it has been generally concluded that Marie de France was from Normandy or Isle de France and that she lived at the court of England in the last part of the XIIth century or at the beginning of the XIIIth.

There is a very considerable number of manuscripts of the poems of Marie de France both in England and France. Her fables and Lais were edited by Roquefort in 1820 and since that time have been widely criticised and translated. There are one-hundred and three fables in the collection as published by Roquefort, fifty-eight of which are on subjects treated by La Fontaine.

(B). Following Marie de France, we have the Isopet de Lyon a collection of fables written in the dialect of Franche-Comté in the XIIIth century. This Isopet has sixty-one fables, thirty-four of which are found also in La Fontaine. These fables are a very free paraphrase of the Latin fables of the so-called Anonyme de Nèvelet. The collection was published by Wendelin Foerster in 1882. He made use of six manuscripts, two from the Bibliothèque nationale at Paris, one from Wolfenbüttel, one from Vienna and two from Lyon.

In Robert's Fables Inédites des XII<sup>e</sup>, XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles he published three Isopets which he calls Isopet I, Isopet-Avionnet and Isopet II. The second one of these collections con-

tains so few fables that are found in the five collections which are compared in this paper that it has been omitted.

(C) The Isopet I is from a manuscript of the Bibliothèque nationale. There are three other copies of the same fables in that library but Robert considered them of less value than the one which he has edited, because they were copied a century after the fables were written and the copiers did not hesitate to make changes and corrections. The manuscript which Robert has edited as Isopet I, was divided into two parts. The first has a prologue and sixty-four Latin fables in elegiac verse by some anonymous writer whom the editor calls Galfred or Geoffroi. An epilogue in French serves as a connection with the second part which contains nineteen fables of Avianus. The French version of these eighteen with the long epilogue forms the Isopet-Avionet.

It is in the epilogue that we find the little which is known of the author of these fables. Some opinions about him are given in the second part of this paper.

(D). The Isopet II is also from manuscripts of the Bibliothèque nationale. Robert does not mention the number of manuscripts that he consulted nor the number of fables which they contained. There are forty fables in the Isopet II with a very short ~~epilogue~~ prologue. Both the Isopet I and the Isopet II belong to the fourteenth century.

There are fifteen fables which occur in each of the five collections which we are considering. They are (the ~~fav~~ titles given are those of La Fontaine): le Corbeau et le Renard, le Loup et le Chien, la Génisse, la Chèvre et la Brebis en société avec le Lion; le Loup et l'Agneau; la Lice et sa Compagne; les Membres et l'Estomac; le Geai paré des plumes du Paon; la Grenouille et le Rat; le Loup, la Chèvre et le Chevreau; la Montaigne qui accouche; le Cerf se voyant dans l'eau; le Chien qui lâche sa proie pour l'ombre; ~~xxx~~ la Chauve-Souris et les deux Belettes; le Lion et le Rat; and la Lièvre et les Grenouilles.

There are sixteen more which are found in four of the five collections: Les Grenouilles qui demandent un Roi; le Lion devenu vieux; la Mouche et la Fourmi; le Rat et l'Éléphant; les deux Perroquets, le Roi et son Fils; la Forêt et le Bûcheron; and la Grenouille qui veut se faire aussi grosse que le Boeuf are not found in the Isopet II but are in the other four collections. Marie de France has no fables which treat the subject of les Loups et les Brebis, le Renard et le Bûche, les deux Mulets, le Coche et la Mouche, le Serpent et la Lime. And the author of ~~l'~~ Isopet de Lyon did not write a fable about le Loup et la Cicogne l'Ane et le petit Chien, nor le Soliel et les Grenouilles while the other fabulists whom we are considering did. This author wrote a fable about l'Hirondelle et les petits Oiseaux but it has been partly lost; only the conclusion of the fable and the "moralité" remain.

Of these thirty-one fables, no one ~~will~~ of those by the medieval writers will compare in charm with La Fontaine's fables. He was called the Inimitable by his contemporaries and their opinion has been confirmed by posterity. But several of his fore-runners in early French literature could use the natural turn of expression, the naiveness, the irony and gayety which delight us



as unusual as the one which La Fontaine gives in his fable le Loup et l'Agneau:-

La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure.  
Or as ironical as ~~xxx~~ in the fable la Chauve-Souris et les deux  
belettes:-

Le sage dit selon les gens,  
Vive le roi! vive la ligue!

Having a philosophy such as he has, it is natural that La Fontaine should teach ethics very different from those of ~~the~~ the Isopots. Silent, unquestioning endurance of evils, or great sacrifices or indeed anything which causes pain or suffering he avoided himself and he would have others avoid. He teaches a philosophy of nature. He would have man follow his instincts, secure his own happiness, moderately, without injuring the happiness of others.

Lastly, there is a great difference in the psychological intuition of the writers. La Fontaine is the only one who ~~possessed~~ possessed any great understanding of mankind. He has described men of every character and of all conditions: kings, lords, bourgeois, peasants, priests, scholars, hypocrites, braggarts rascals and he has described each in the position and with the language which fits his character. A "comédie" having such actors is bound to be interesting. The Isopots rarely show anything of this. They use the same language for king and serf. The position or place in which the action occurs is left indefinite.

In addition to this psychological intuition, he has a keenness of poetical perception and a delicate feeling for metrical rhythm, elements which make the modern fabulist so infinitely superior to his predecessors. The writers of the Isopots lack these three requisites of a poet and consequently have produced fables of a very mediocre value.

Taking the medieval fables as a whole and ~~comparing~~ comparing them with La Fontaine, we find that where he has localized ~~xxx~~ they have generalized and where he has generalized they have localized. He makes his fable definite and particular and gives a "morale" for all humanity. They give a fable with few traits to particularize it and give a "morale" for a particular class of people under certain social conditions.



as unusual as the one which La Fontaine gives in his fable le Loup et l'Agneau:-

La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure.  
Or as ironical as ~~xxx~~ in the fable la Chauve-Souris et les deux Belettes:-

Le sage dit selon les gens,  
Vive le roi! vive la ligue!

Having a philosophy such as he has, it is natural that La Fontaine should teach ethics very different from those of ~~of the~~ the Isopets. Silent, unquestioning endurance of evils, or great sacrifices or indeed anything which causes pain or suffering he avoided himself and he would have others avoid. He teaches a philosophy of nature. He would have man follow his instincts, secure his own happiness, moderately, without injuring the happiness of others.

Lastly, there is a great difference in the psychological intuition of the writers. La Fontaine is the only one who ~~possessed~~ possessed any great understanding of mankind. He has described men of every character and of all conditions: kings, lords, bourgeois, peasants, priests, scholars, hypocrites, braggarts rascals; and he has described each in the position and with the language which fits his character. A "comédie" having such actors is bound to be interesting. The Isopets rarely show anything of this. They use the same language for king and serf. The position or place in which the action occurs is left indefinite.

In addition to this psychological intuition, he has a keenness of poetical perception and a delicate feeling for metrical rhythm, elements which make the modern fabulist so infinitely superior to his predecessors. The writers of the Isopets lack these three requisites of a poet and consequently have produced fables of a very mediocre value.

Taking the medieval fables as a whole and ~~comparing~~ comparing them with La Fontaine, we find that where he has localized ~~xxx~~ they have generalized and where he has generalized they have localized. He makes his fable definite and particular and gives a "morale" for all humanity. They give a fable with few traits to particularize it and give a "morale" for a particular class of people under certain social conditions.

A Comparison of the fables contained in La Fontaine, Marie de France and the collections of fables Isopet I, Isopet II and Isopet de Lyon ~~to~~ to determine ~~the~~ their literary value and ~~to~~ to show ~~the~~ the changes in the fables due to the rank and profession of the writer, the customs and beliefs of his century.

The literature of the middle ages is very rich in collections of fables, known as Isopets. The best of these are: the Isopet of Marie de France, the Isopet de Lyon and the Isopets published by Robert as Isopet I and Isopet II. We shall consider first the little which is positively known of the writers of each of the collections.

(A). Marie de France belongs probably to the last half of the XIIth century. Our information concerning her is very meager. In the epilogue to her fables she says:

Marie ai num, si sui de France.

And she mentions some 'comte Willaume' over whose identity many scholars have argued and have come to no plausible conclusion. She is mentioned as a contemporary by Denis Pyramus a writer of the middle ages about whom equally little is known. "Mais quand nous ponsons arriver a une date certaine on nous renvoie de Pyramus a Marie et de Marie a Pyramus." From a few references in her poems, it has been generally concluded that Marie de France was from Normandy or Isle de France and that she lived at the court of England in the last part of the XIIth century or at the beginning of the XIIIth.

There is a very considerable number of manuscripts of the poems of Marie de France both in England and France. Her fables and Lais were edited by Roquefort in 1820 and since that time have been widely criticised and translated. There are one-hundred and three fables in the collection as published by Roquefort, fifty-eight of which are on subjects treated by La Fontaine.

(B). Following Marie de France, we have the Isopet de Lyon a collection of fables written in the dialect of Franche-Comté in the XIIIth century. This Isopet has sixty-one fables, thirty-four of which are found also in La Fontaine. These fables are a very free paraphrase of the Latin fables of the so-called Anonyme de Nèvelet. The collection was published by Wendelin Foerster in 1862. He made use of six manuscripts, two from the Bibliothèque nationale at Paris, one from Wolfenbüttel, one from Vienna and two from Lyon.

In Robert's Fables Inédites des XII<sup>e</sup>, XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles he published three Isopets which he calls Isopet I, Isopet-Avionnet and Isopet II. The second one of these collections con-

tains so few fables that are found in the five collections which are compared in this paper that it has been omitted.

(C) The Isopet I is from a manuscript of the Bibliothèque nationale. There are three other copies of the same fables in that library but Robert considered them of less value than the one which he has edited, because they were copied a century after the fables were written and the copiers did not hesitate to make changes and corrections. The manuscript which Robert has edited as Isopet I, was divided into two parts. The first has a prologue and sixty-four Latin fables in elegiac verse by some anonymous writer whom the editor calls Galfred or Geoffroi. An epilogue in French serves as a connection with the second part which contains nineteen fables of Avianus. The French version of these eighteen with the long epilogue forms the Isopet-Avionet.

It is in the epilogue that we find the little which is known of the author of these fables. Some opinions about him are given in the second part of this paper.

(D). The Isopet II is also from manuscripts of the Bibliothèque nationale. Robert does not mention the number of manuscripts that he consulted nor the number of fables which they contained. There are forty fables in the Isopet II with a very short prologue. Both the Isopet I and the Isopet II belong to the fourteenth century.

There are fifteen fables which occur in each of the five collections which we are considering. They are (the titles given are those of La Fontaine): le Corbeau et le Renard, le Loup et le Chien, la Génisse, la Chèvre et la Brebis en société avec le Lion; le Loup et l'Agneau; la Lice et sa Compagne; les Membres et l'Estomac; le Geai paré des plumes du Paon; la Grenouille et le Rat; le Loup, la Chèvre et le Chevreau; la Montaigne qui accouche; le Cerf se voyant dans l'eau; le Chien qui lâche sa proie pour l'ombre; ~~xxx~~ la Chauve-Souris et les deux Belettes; le Lion et le Rat; and la Lièvre et les Grenouilles.

There are sixteen more which are found in four of the five collections: Les Grenouilles qui demandent un Roi; le Lion devenu vieux; la Mouche et la Fourmi; le Rat et l'Elephant; les deux Perroquets, le Roi et son Fils; la Forêt et le Bûcheron; and la Grenouille qui veut se faire aussi grosse que le Boeuf are not found in the Isopet II but are in the other four collections. Marie de France has no fables which treat the subject of les Loups et les Brebis, le Renard et le Busc, les deux Mylets, le Coche et la Mouche, le Serpent et la Lime. And the author of Isopet de Lyon did not write a fable about le Loup et la Cicogne l'Ane et le petit Chien, nor le Soliel et les Grenouilles while the other fabulists whom we are considering did. This author wrote a fable about l'Hirondelle et les petits Oiseaux but it has been partly lost; only the conclusion of the fable and the "moralité" remain.

Of these thirty-one fables, no one ~~xxx~~ of those by the medieval writers will compare in charm with La Fontaine's fables. He was called the Inimitable by his contemporaries and their opinion has been confirmed by posterity. But several of his fore-runners in early French literature could use the natural turn of expression, the naiveness, the irony and gayety which delight us



in La Fontaine. The French fable in its early forms frequently shows the art of the story-teller; it is entertaining and full of picturesque details and expressions. The fable du Renard et du Corbel in the XIVth century collections shows some traits similar to the lively and picturesque fable of La Fontaine--le Corbeau et le Renard:-

Maistre Corbeau sur un arbre perché  
 Tenait en son bec un fromage.  
 Maistre Renard par l'odeur alleché  
 Lui tint a peu près ce langage,  
 Et bon jour Monsieur du Corbeau,  
 Que vous êtes joli! Que vous me semblez beau!  
 Sans mentir si votre ramage  
 Se rapporte a votre plumage  
 Vous êtes le Phoenix des hostes de ces bois.  
 A ces mots le Corbeau ne se sent pas de joye:  
 Et pour montrer sa belle voix,  
 Il ouvre ~~un~~ un large bec, laisse tomber sa proie.  
 Le Renard s'en saisit, et dit: Mon bon Monsieur  
 Apprenez que tout flatteur  
 Vit aux dépense de celui qui l'écoute.  
 Cette leçon vaut bien un fromage sans doute.  
 Le Corbeau honteux et confus  
 Jura, mais un plus tard, qu'on ne l'y prendroit plus.

We find several descriptive phrases in the old fables which resemble La Fontaine's and one which is quite like his. In the Isopet I, the fable begins:-

Sire Thiercelin le corbiau,  
 Qui cuide estre avenant et biau,  
 Tenoit en son bec un fromage.

and a similar expression occurs in the Isopet de Lyon:-

A vulpil cui fain destroignoit  
 Li corbeas encontre uenoit,  
 Portant en son bec un fromaige.

We notice in the first of these quotations from the Isopets the <sup>influence</sup> effect of the Roman de Renard in the titles which are given the animals. In the Latin fables we never find the proper name used. La Fontaine sometimes uses the old French title and at others the word of Latin origin. In this fable he uses the Latin title throughout, *in speaking of the crow*.

The flattery which the Fox gives the Crow in each of the old fables reminds one of La Fontaine's:-

Doumage iert que ne chantes  
 AAussi bien com fist votre pere:  
 Se ainsi chantiez, par saint pere  
 Je cuid qu'en tout le bois n'eust  
 Oisel qui tant a tous pleust.

In the Isopet de Lyon, the flattery is very clever:-

"Dex vous saut, dit Renars, beas frere,  
 Moult resamblez bien vostre pere  
 En noblesce, en sent, en valour,  
 En blanche et en fresche colour."

Rosseau says of this fable:- "Le vers est admirable, l'harmonie <sup>of La Fontaine's</sup>

seule en fait image. Je vois un grand vilain bec ouvert; j'entends tomber le fromage à travers les branches! La Fontaine has used imitative harmony in this poem. The words "s'en saisit" for instance are an imitation of sound. It is almost impossible to pronounce the three syllables slowly, and the rapidity shows the eagerness of the fox to seize the cheese.

The art of the poet of suggesting by the sounds of his words the idea, is lacking entirely in the old fables. The familiar terms which are so frequent in La Fontaine are very rare in the medieval fable. The Latin fables were translated by the 'clerc' in the monastery and if there was a choice between a common word and a scholarly word he chose the latter. La Fontaine on the other hand uses the familiar, often vulgar term. His fable of le Loup, la Chèvre et le Chèvreau has several of these vulgar expressions. They are interesting, aside from the vividness which they give to the fable, for the traces of traditional folk-lore which they show. The words "de guet", "foin du Loup et de sa race" and the expression "patte blanche" are found in the folk tales of various parts of France. This fable when compared with the fable in Isopet I illustrates the superiority which La Fontaine's fable gains through his use of expressive terms and of varied rhymes verse form:-

La bique allant remplir sa traînante mamelle,  
Et paître l'herbe nouvelle,  
Ferma sa porte au loquet,  
~~N'aurait-elle pas vu le biquet:~~  
Non sans dire à son biquet:  
Gardez vous, sur votre vie,  
D'ouvrer, que l'on ne vous die,  
Pour enseigne et mot de guet,  
Foin du Loup et de sa race!  
Comme elle disait ces mots,  
Le Loup, de fortune, passa:  
Il les recueille à propos,  
Et les garde en sa mémoire.  
La bique comme on peut croire,  
N'avait pas vu le gloton.  
Des qu'il la voit partie, il contrefait son ton,  
Et, d'une voix papelarde,  
Il demande qu'on ouvre, en disant, Foin du loup,  
Et croyant entrer tout d'un coup.  
Le biquet soupçonneux par la fente regarde:  
Montrez-moi patte blanche, ou je n'ouvrirai point,  
S'écria-t-il d'abord. Patte blanche est un point  
C'est les loups, comme on sait, rarement en usage.  
Celui-ci, fort surpris d'entendre ce langage,  
Comme il étoit venu s'en retourna chez soi.  
Où seroit le biquet, s'il eût ajouté foi  
Au mot de guet, que, de fortune,  
Notre loup avait entendu?

The fable in Isopet I is very similar as to action:

La chèvre va querir viande  
Pour son chevreau, et li commande  
Et l'admoneste que du toit

Ne se meuve, d'ou il estoit:  
 Car s'il s'en part, sache de voir  
 Qu'il y pourra doumage avoir,  
 Et dont il se tiendra pour fos.  
 En l'hostel l'a laissie enclos.  
 Comme ol fust demouré sous,  
 Scavez-vous? Ysangrin li lous  
 Hurte a l'huis, boute et appelle,  
 Et change sa voix et chevrelle,  
 Ouvre l'huis, dist-il, a ta mere.  
 Non fera, dist-il, par saint pere,  
 Assés y pourrés appeller:  
 Bien vous connois au chevreller;  
 Tant le sachiez vous contrefaire,  
 N'entreres ja en mon repaire;  
 Et si voi bien par un pertuis  
 Que j'ai ci trouvé en cest huis,  
 Que vous estes ung loup pour voir,  
 Qui me voules ci decevoir.  
 Ailleurs vous estuet quérir proie.  
 Ainsii le chevrel l'en envoie.

In the Isopet I the fable dou Lyon et dou Rat has an introduction that is interesting because of the short description of nature. ~~xxxx~~ Such description is very rare in the old fables.

Un lion qui las ost esté,  
 Se reposoit un jour d'esté,  
 Pour le grant chaut que il avoit,  
 En un biau lieu foillu et froit.

A similar expression occurs in the Isopet de Lyon:

En .l. bois plaisant pour deduire  
 Dort li lions & sus la verdure.  
 D'environ lui en l'erbe fresche  
 Les rates demoinnent lour tresche.

One of the striking differences between La Fontaine and his predecessors in the middle ages is in his use of meter and rhyme. He varies these in almost every fable. Of the thirty-one which we are considering there is only one of the XVIIth century fabulist's in which the meter is the same throughout; that is the fable of le Rat ~~xxxx~~ de ville et le Rat des champs & and it lacks the charm which the fables with varying rhyme have. This fable he has divided into four verse stanzas with the verses rhyming alternately:-

Autrefois le rat de ville  
 Invita le rat des champs,  
 D'une façon fort civile,  
 A des reliefs d'ortolans.

Sur un tapis de Turquie  
 Le couvert se trouva mis.  
 Je laisse a penser la vie  
 Que firent ces deux amis.

Le régal fut fort honnête,  
 Rien ne manquait au festin;



Mais quelqu'un troubla la fête  
Pendant qu'ils étoient en train.

A la porte de la salle  
Ils entendirent du bruit:  
Le rat de ville détale;  
Son camarade le suit.

Le bruit cesse, on se retire:  
Rats en campagne aussitôt;  
Et le citadin de dire:  
Achevons tout notre rôl.

~~Et l'un d'eux se met à dire:~~  
Ex

C'est assez; dit le rustique:  
Demain vous viendrez chez moi.  
Ce n'est pas que je me pique  
De tous vos festins de roi:

Mais rien ne vient m'interrompre;  
Je mange tout à loisir.  
Adieu donc: fi du plaisir  
Que la crainte peut corrompre!

In a fable where the thought is constantly changing from gay to serious, we seem to require a change in the verse form and a change in rhyme. In the fable of les deux Mulets, the meter changes with the action:-

Deux mulets cheminoit l'un d'avoine chargé,  
L'autre portant l'argent de la gabelle.  
Celui-ci, glorieux d'une charge si belle,  
N'eût voulu pour beaucoup en être soulagé.  
Il marchait d'un pas relevé,  
Et faisoit sonner sa sonnette:  
Quand, l'ennemi se présentant,  
Comme il en vouloit à l'argent,  
Sur le mulet du fisc une troupe se jette,  
Le saisit au frein, et ~~l'arrête~~ l'arrête.  
Le mulet, en se défendant,  
Se sent percer de coups: il gémit, il soupire,  
Est-ce donc là, dit-il, ce qu'on m'avoit promis?  
Ce mulet qui me suit du danger se retire;  
Et moi, j'y tombe, et je péris.  
Ami, lui dit son camarade,  
Il n'est pas tousjours bon d'avoir un haut emploi,  
Si tu n'avois servi qu'un meunier, comme moi,  
Tu ne serois pas si malade.

If we compare this fable with the one on the same subject in the Isopet II, we see how monotonous the use of a short verse and alternate rhymes can become:-

Un biau cheval de pris  
Poignoit vers un larris  
Par une estroite sente:  
Un asnes a encontre  
Qui y estoit entré;  
De gaux portait bien trente.

Quand le cheval le vit,  
 De li ot graut despit  
 Et forment se desvoie:  
 Il li dist par ayr:  
 A moy dois obeir  
 Et lesser moi la voie.

Moult ay bien eu grant los  
 Es tournois et es os  
 De maint vaillant baron:  
 Et tu, chetis puans,  
 N'es pas obeissans  
 A ma noble façon.

And continues thus for six more stanzas. The fable written in this way has the effect of a song. It is too symmetrical, we are carried along by the melody and forget the ideas.

The author of this Isopet has paid great attention to the rhyme and meter of his fables. He makes constant use of alternate rhyme, but varies the meter in different fables; we find verses of six syllables in addition to the eight syllable line which is the narrative meter par excellence of the middle ages. He never varies the meter in a single fable, however. The author has divided his poems in various ways, also; sometimes we have quatrains sometimes stanzas of six or eight lines and more rarely an uninterrupted succession of verses.

In the six line stanza the first and second verses, the fourth and fifth rhyme together, while the third rhymes with the sixth. The quatrains have frequently alternate rhymes. In the same fable the writer may use both quatrains and six line stanzas. The fables are very monotonous because of this unvarying rhyme scheme so that when we read the naive statement of the author in the epilogue

Cils qui cest romans fist  
 Moult de sa peine y mist,  
 De quoy il se repent,  
 Car les fols qui l'orrent  
 Communement diront  
 Que il ne vault néant.

we can quite agree with him about his fables when he says "qu'il ne vault néant."

This Isopet II is the least interesting of the medieval ~~fables~~ Isopets. It is a colorless paraphrase of some Latin collection of fables. The writer has given more attention to his verse and rhyme than to his ideas.

The Isopet I is not nearly so literal translation and many interesting details have crept in. While the verse form is the same throughout it is the octosyllabic and is not as monotonous as the shorter verses in the Isopet II. The verses rhyme two and two.

The Isopet de Lyon has greater literary value than either of its successors in the fourteenth century. The prologue expresses the favorite idea of the ~~medieval~~ medieval scholars that every piece of literature has two meanings, an exterior, apparent

one and a hidden interior one.

Un petit iardin ai hantey,  
Flours e fruit porte a grant plantey.  
Li Fruiz est bons, la flours nouvele,  
Delitauble, plaisanz et bele.  
Li flours est exemple de fauble,  
Li fruiz doctrine profitauble.  
Bone est la flour por deliter:  
Lou fruit cuil, se uuez profiter.

This writer has thought it useful to try and make "la fleur" of his fable agreeable as well as ~~the~~ "le fruit". The other authors of fables have employed all their talents in making the "morale" interesting and "profitauble". He has felt that the "morale" is not everything; "qu'à côté de la morale, il y a un petit drame qui, séparé de sa compagne, a droit à faire bonne figure. Sur ce drame il a porté toute son attention, et, en dépit de la sécheresse de son modèle, il a réussi à le rendre vivant et anime. Là où le poète latin, en quatre vers, avait placé le loup en face de l'agneau, comme deux mannequins privés de sentiment, notre trouvère humanise les personnages. Il nous montre le loup "de pensée mal saine" et ~~le~~ l'agneau "de simple coraige," qui

Grant paour ai, ne seit qu'il face  
Quar Ysegrins fort le menace. "

One striking difference between these fables of the Isopet de Lyon and the Isopet I and Isopet II is the amount of conversation used in the fables of the Isopet de Lyon. The author seems to have realized that it made his fables more vivid, to put the narration in the form of dialogue. For example if we compare the fable de la Chievre et du Loup of Isopet I (which has been quoted on page 4) with the fable in Isopet de Lyon we can see how much the XIIIth century writer has gained by using direct speeches.

Li chievre s'an vai en porchet,  
Ou burgiz laisse son bouchet.  
Ius a fert a une sarruire  
Qu'est estachiez a fort clouhuire.  
La mere son enfant ensoigne, *{ Que bien de soi garde se poigne*  
"Beax fils tenez vos d'une part,  
N'alez pas ioant per lo part;  
Quar tost t'aurait lai fait domaige  
Li lous qui n'ainme ton lignaige."  
Li chevriz toz coi s'est tenuz.  
Pou apres li lous est venuz,  
A l'us colement tape et bote,  
Petit coi fiert de sa grant plote.

There are many more interesting and picturesque words in this fable than in the one in Isopet I. Indeed, throughout this collection there is a greater number of interesting expressions. If the wolf finds a head "moult bien painte et bien portraite" and finds it "despourvue de sanc et de chalour," it is only after having "bouteé du pied cop ça, cop là." The story of the raicle qui vestit les pannes dou paon is very entertaining:-

Li raicles trove d'aventure  
D'un bel paon la couverture.  
Mout ere de mirolez pointe

Et de diverses colours tainte.  
-----Quand fu atornez  
Ses compaignons de son lignaige  
Ne doigne voir per son outraige.

-----  
Des paons suet la compaignie,  
Cil conoissent tost ~~xx~~ sa folie.  
Entre lour li uns ~~M~~ l'autre guigne,  
Chescuns s'an truffe et s'an eschigne.  
"Di nous, font il, es tu trouee  
Ceste robe, ou se l'as amblee?"

A  
After the peacocks have stripped him of his borrowed feathers,  
he goes back to his family, but-

Des siens ne atent il pitie,  
Qu'il avoit aincois despitie,-----

-----  
De lui se moquent, de lui rient.  
"Mes sires li paons! ce dient,  
Per coitoisie quar nos dites,  
De vostre robe que feistes?  
A menestrier l'avez donee,  
Espoir, por vostre renommee,"  
Li autre dit: "Mais l'a iuhie  
Li compains par sa druerie."  
L'autre dit: "Mais est en la perche  
Se tu ne m'an croi, si l'encerche."  
Il en vuet faire parement  
Es bons jours por desguisement."  
Uns plus saiges prant la parole,  
Qui parle de moilleur escole.  
"Tu fus raicles, or es raclet!  
Mout t'ont ioie de bon eclet  
Cil qui t'ont ta robe tolue;  
Fausement l'avoies vestue.

When we compare any of these fables of the XIIIth and XIVth centuries with those of Marie de France who wrote in the XIIth one of the most noticeable differences is in style; that of Marie de France is remarkable for its "naïveté". She wrote at a time when the language was in its childhood and the simple expression was the natural one to use. Moreover, she shows a smoothness, lightness and ease in managing her verse form which proves that she had true poetic talent. There is a charming simplicity in this fable de la Soris e de la Rencille":-

Selune la lettre des escrit  
Vus mustrerai d'une Suriz  
Ki par purchaz e par engin,  
Aveit manage en un mulin.  
Par essemble cunter vus vueil,  
C'un jur s'asist desor le sueil,  
Ses grenonez apareilla  
E de ses piez s'espelucha.  
Devant li passa une Raine



Devant li passa une Raine  
 Si cum aventure la maine,  
 Demanda li en sa raisun  
 S'ele ert Dame de la maisun.  
 Dunt ele se feiseit si mestre,  
 Si li acuntast de sun estre.  
 La Suris li respunt: Amé,  
 Pieça k'en ai la seignorie;  
 Bien est en ma subjection,  
 Qant es pertuiz tut environ,  
 Puis herbregier è jur è nuit  
 Joer è fère mun déduit.

And the mouse hospitably asks the frog to stay and dine with her. E "Andeus s'asient sor la pierre, mult i truvèrent à mengier sanz cuntredit è sanz dangier." Then the frog persuades the mouse to go to a valley where they will have better things to eat. "Ensemble od li s'en ert alée, li preiz fu si plains de rousée, ke tute est la Suriz moillée." When they come to a river the frog attaches the mouse to him just as in the other fables and attempts to drown her. But the result is quite different from the others. Marie de France punishes only the ~~xxx~~ wicked animal and allows the innocent victim to escape.

La Suriz pipe en halt è crie  
 Ke bien cuideit estre traire;  
 Un Escoufles aleit volant  
 Vit la Soriz si haut pipant,  
 Ses ~~xxxx~~ èles clost, à-vaul descent,  
 Li et la Raine ensamble prent,  
 Andeus furent au fil pendanz.  
 La Raine fu corsue et granz;  
 Li Eschofles par cuveitise  
 La Soriz lait, la Raine ad prise  
 Mengiée l'ad è devourée  
 E la Suriz est délivrée.

Marie de France uses the eight syllable verse, rhyming two and two. Since there are no variations, it becomes very monotonous, however interesting the thought may be.

The Isopet de Lyon and the two Isopets of the XIVth century resemble the Latin fable much more closely than does the Isopet of Marie de France. To be sure Marie put into French an English translation of the Latin Isopet of Romulus. We have no manuscript of these English fables nor of the Latin collection, which were the original source of the English, and we thus have no means of knowing how much is original in Marie's Isopet. It would seem however ~~in~~ by comparing her fables with her Lais that the thoughts in the "moralites" belong to her; ~~in~~ but that is something we are unable to prove. In any case her fables are very different from the Latin collections of the middle ages. A considerable number of her apologues do not come from Latin sources; some are Oriental stories that have lived in tradition or have come to Europe by way of Byzantium; others are characteristic medieval stories or fabliaux. All are written in a simple, direct manner that interests us in spite of the monotony of the verse. On the whole

Marie de France's Isopet is the most entertaining of the medieval Isopets.

The two French translations of the Isopet of the Anonyme de Nèvelet have followed the Latin very closely in the thoughts expressed; but they seemed unable to express an idea in any brief concise manner. Both of the French translations, the Isopet de Lyon and the Isopet I are very verbose.

There are a few fables in each of these Isopets the Latin source of which are unknown. But there are fewer of Oriental origin in the Isopets of the XIIIth and XIth centuries than there are in Marie de France.

These scholars of the monastery with their devotion to Latin literature wished to share the pleasure which they found in it and so made translations for the laymen. However, the manners and customs of the Romans ~~at that time~~ were so different from those of the middle ages that the 'clerics' often misunderstood the Latin. The middle ages had no comprehension of any conditions that were not the same as their own; and thus the idea which the translator puts in his fable is sometimes amusingly changed from the original. He translates 'miles' as 'chevalier' and does not know that any thing different was meant; and similarly with other words that refer to Roman customs.

La Fontaine, too, translated Greek and Latin fables into French. But what a difference! His fables are often as brief and concise as the classic fable; they are never verbose as are the medieval fables. He never gives a long and tiresome "morale"; the epigrammatic "morale" is characteristic of his fable. He has given much attention to style and form, which was neglected by the medieval writers.

La Fontaine has done much to make his fable interesting by his use of words. If he has some homely or common thing to describe he does so with the common word and does not hunt for some 'noble' word. "Il faut bien avouer qu'il n'y a pas de synonymes, et quand La Fontaine dit:

Et chacun de tirer le matin, la canaille

A qui mieux mieux; ils firent tous ripaille,

ce dernier mot a quelque chose d'ignoble qui convient a ces pillards gloutons. Mettez a la place: Ils firent tous festin, - on ne voit plus cette voracité brutale. B If a peasant speaks he does not use the language of the court; a merchant and a farmer have different expressions.

In the medieval fable on the other hand, the scholars used the words with which they were familiar in their studies. If there were two words, one common and the other literary, they chose the latter almost invariably. Fortunately the language was still unformed and often the only word which ~~xx~~ could be used was a word 'vivant, et chargés de sensations' and the fable is interesting to us, seemingly in spite of the author.



These medieval writers lacked the genius which made La Fontaine the 'Enimitable' and lacking that, their fables have a very slight literary value.

## II.

The differences between the fables of these five collections are far more numerous than the resemblances. Men often see the same thing from a point of view entirely different, and besides this great cause of a divergence between the fables, there are several others. The social position of the writer, his profession give rise to noticeable variations in the narration of the same action and especially to differences in the moral which the author adds to his fable.

For example le Lion et le Loup of La Fontaine shows an inspiration quite different from that of the old fabulists. La Fontaine's fable is a remarkable one in style and action. The two characters are admirably described. But the liberty ~~xxxxxx~~ of which La Fontaine speaks is not the great sentiment which brings freedom to a nation. His liberty is the sort expressed in the question of the wolf: "Vous ne courez donc pas où vous voulez?" Perhaps for him it means to be free from social bonds.

The characters of the two animals in the fable of La Fontaine and in the old fables are very different. As the ideas of the thing to be pictured have changed, so the characters have changed. With the fabulist of the XVIIth century it is not a question of slaves and freemen but of two personnages from the lower ranks of society. "Ce chien, si poli et si gras, n'est qu'un domestique de bonne maison, fier de sa livrée; et le loup une sorte de vagabond maigre, hâve, decharné, sans souper." La Fontaine makes us laugh at the expense of this wolf. He is afraid of the dog, he is a glutton, he looks jealously at the fine appearance of the dog and finally he weeps "de tendresse" at the thought of the good things to eat which await him. the wolf approaches the dog "humblement" and endures his patronage.

The fable du Loup qui se veut accompagner au Chien of Isopet I seems very serious after reading La Fontaine's fable. The writer of this old fable must have known what it was to live when liberty was always in peril from some great lord. Here the dog and the wolf speak with each other as friends and equals and the wolf is ready to earn his living by working for it; but as soon as he learns that it must be by giving up his freedom he says:-

-----No pris-je deduit  
Et tel aise com je souloie  
Que je, pour mon ventre, serf soie!  
Unls franc povrehoms plus habunde  
Que le plus riches serfs du monde.  
L'homme serf ne puet avoir rien;  
Mais le franc a soi et le sien:  
Franchise est si bonne et si douce.  
Nulle douceur à lui ne touche.

And the old writer adds thirty-six more verses of moralising on the subject of liberty. He criticises those who through cupidity haunt the palace, halls and courts of kings, princes and pope.

Dont doit ~~hixxxx~~ bien hair cils sa panse  
Qui l'ot difame et des avance  
Qui court et fuit isnel le cours

De son pain ne veult faire soupe.

Des ciels le pere debonnaire  
Dieu que d'amour tant post a traire  
Bailla son filz, par traurté  
Afin que fusiens racheté.

Mieux voudrois-je mourir  
Que, pour mon ventre emplir,  
Fusse lié par jour:  
J'ai petit à mengier;  
Mais hors sui de dangier  
De maistre et de seignour.

-----En nule guise  
 Et le ne voil perdre ma franchise  
 Por avoir .l. poul d'abondance;  
 Encor n'ain je pais tant ma pançe,  
 I'ai deu ne place, que i'amoie  
 Mon ventre ~~estre~~ tant que sers an soie  
 Miez vaut franc estre en povrote  
 Qu'avoir richesses en vilte.

Li sers chose n'a a lui bone,  
Il n'est sires de se persone.  
Son seignour est cors et avoir,  
Riens qui suens soit ne puet avoir.

Mais de franchise la noblesse  
Sorement toute richesses.

Franchise est de cuor la viande

Технический индекс

Plus grant solaz cuer ne demandando.

The poet seems to feel that this accumulation of praises of liberty is not sufficient so he refers to the Bible for added support:-

"Maldit soit, dit Noe li peres  
Li fil Cham, sers soit de ses freres"

Li droiz deu la vost ~~esprout~~ esprouer  
 Si come en la loi puis trouer.  
 Li lois de nature et l'escripte  
 Ont donques servituz maldite,  
 Quar pour pechie fust estrovee.

La Fontaine's fable of le Loup et le Chien and Marie de France's on the same subject are very similar. There are the same details and almost the same expressions. La Fontaine says:-

Un loup n'avait que les os et la peau  
 Tant les chiens faisoient bonne garde:  
 Ce loup rencontre un dogue aussi puissant que beau,  
 Gras, poli, qui s'étoit fourvoyé par mégarde,  
 L'attaquer, le mettre en quartiers,  
 Sire loup l'eût fait volontiers:  
 Mais il falloir livrer bataille;  
 Et le matin étoit de taille  
 A se défendre hardiment.  
 Le loup donc l'aborde humblement,  
 Entre en propos, et lui fait compliment  
 Sur son embonpoint qu'il admire.

And Marie de France using almost the same words:-

Uns Leus et un Chiens s'encuntrèrent,  
 Parmi un Bos à il alèrent.  
 Li Leus a le Kien esgardei,  
 E puis si a à lui pallei;  
 Frère, fait-il, mult estes biaux,  
 E mult est luisanz vostre piaux.  
 Li Chien respunt: c'est veritez,  
 Je menju bien, s'en ai assez;  
 E souef giz quant pluet le jor  
 Par devant les piez mun Segnor,  
 Puis chascun jur runger les os,  
 Dunt je me fas e cras e gros.

Comparing the "morales" of these two fables, we find a striking difference; La Fontaine draws a "morale" from his having a very general application, and not teaching any very noble ethics.

La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure.

Marie de France who lived in the time when feudalism was flourishing and saw the effects of "la raison du plus fort" being always "la meilleure," gives a "moralité" having a special lesson for the freeman who for the sake of protection becomes the vassal of some lord.

Par cest essample vus promet  
 Que cil est mult folx qui se met  
 En sougit o en servitude,  
 Car mauvese est cele constume;  
 Qui a sun talent à delivre  
 Ne laisse en pais nul hume vivre.

Each of the Isopets reflects to a greater or less extent the morals and customs of the time in which they were written. Marie de France describes feudalism. Every "moralité" as she terms the "morale" of her fables, is directed against some evil of her

age: against the seignor, absolute ruler over his dependents; against the unjust judges who sell their justice; against sorcery, trickery, and against the rebellious serf.

Marie de France fights continually against the refusal of justice. She has a whole series of fables directed at the judges who decide in favor of the powerful vassal at the expense of the poor man. There is a deep sadness about these fables for they make us feel so forcibly that the poor man can do nothing injustice is meted out to him. The fable dou Leu e de l'Aingniel illustrates this:-

Ce dist dou Leu e dou Aigniel  
Qui beveient a un Rossel;  
Li Lox a la sorso bevoit  
E li Aigniaus a-vaul esteit.  
Ireemont parla li Luz  
Ki mult esteit cuntraliuz;  
Par mautalent palla a lui  
Tu m'as, dist-il, fet grant anui,  
Li Aigneuz li ad respundit:  
Sire! eh quoi dunc? ne vois-tu,  
Tu m'as ci ceste aigue troublee  
N'en puis boire ma saolee;  
Autresi m'en irai, ce crei  
Cum jeo ving tut murant de sei.  
Li Aigneuz adunc respunt:  
Sire, ja bevez vus a-munt,  
De vus me vient kankes j'ai beu;  
Coi, fist li Lox, maldia me tu.  
L'Aigneux respunt, n'en ai voloir;  
Li Loux li dit: jeo sai de voir,  
Ce meisme me fist tes Pere  
A ceste source u od lui ere.  
Or ad sis mois, si cum jeo crei  
Qu'en retraiez, fait-il, sor mei?  
N'iere pas neiz, si cum jeo crei cuit;  
E coi pur ce, li ~~Leu~~ Lus a dit  
Ja me fuz tu ore cuntraire  
E chose ke tu ne deiz faire;  
Dunc prist li Lox, l'Engniel petit  
As denz l'estrange, si l'ocist.  
Moralite.

Ci funt li riche Robeur,  
Li Vesconte e li Jugur,  
De cax k'il unt en lur Justise;  
Fauze aqoison par cuveitise,  
Truevent assez pur ax cunfundre,  
Suvent les funt as Plais semundre;  
La char lur tolent e la pel,  
Si cum li Lox fist a l'Aingniel.

In the very curious fable dou Vilain qui norri une Choë there is another "morale" for those in power to follow in selecting their judges:-

Pur ce ne doit Princes ne Rois



Ses coumudemenz ne ses lois  
A Covoitez mettre en baillie  
Car sa Justise en est perie.

Another apologue, dou Chien è d'une Berbis gives us a picture of medieval conditions among the lower classes:-

C'est essample vus voil mustrer  
De mains Humes le puis pruver  
Ki par mentir è par trichier  
Funt les Povres suvent plédier.  
Faus tesmoignages avant traient,  
De l'avoir as Povres les paient  
Ne leur chaut que li Las deviengne,  
Mais que chascuns sa part en tiengne.

The "morale" of the fable du Chat, du Mulet et de la Souriz gives us another example of the corruption of justice at that time:

Par cest essemple vus devise  
Nus ne se deit mettre en justise  
De celi qui mal li veult fire:  
Returner deit en autre terre.

Again, the fable dou Goupiz è dou Lox has a "morale for those who administer justice":-

Ainsi deit faire li buns Sire  
Il ne deit pas jugier ne dire  
Se li Hume qui de lui tiennent  
Irieement à sa curt viennent  
Ne deit si devers l'un parler  
Qu'a l'autre n'en deie peser,  
Mès adrécier à sun pooir  
E li refaire remanoir.

Every fable of Marie de France has a special application. The five "morales" just quoted are directed against the denial of justice. Another series of the fables try to teach some virtues to the great vassals. Under a government where the land was divided into a large number of estates, each governed by an absolute lord, and having no chief ruler with the power of enforcing his laws, there were bound to be very great injustices. Marie de France saw these around her continually at the court and she preaches against them constantly. For example:-

Autresi est dou mal Siegnur  
Se povres Hum li fet henur  
E puis demant le guerredun  
Ja n'en aura si mangrei nun  
Portant k'il soit en sa baillie  
Mercier le deit de sa vie.

A comparison of the "morale" of La Fontaine's fable, le



Lion et le Rat with Marie de France's shows the contrast between his general "morale" and her particular one. La Fontaine says:-

Il, faut, autant qu'on peut, obliger tout le monde,  
On a souvent besoin d'un plus petit que soi.

The "morale" of Marie de France is one of those which give advice to the great vassal:-

Par cest fable nus assoume  
K'exanple i preingnent li RicheHoume  
Qui seur les Povres unt pooir;  
Si lur meffunt par nunsavoir;  
K'il en aient bune merci;  
A venir lur puet autresi  
Ke cil li puet aveir mestier  
E miauz li saura cunseiller  
Au besong s'il est entrepris  
Que li meaudres de ses amis.

The criticisms which she makes of those in power seem very gentle when we consider the evils which they committed. Occasionally, however, we find a threat of vengeance:-

Par méismes ceste resun  
Prenuns essanple dou Luin;  
Quicunques chiet en nun poeir  
S'il pert se force et sun aveir  
Mult le tiennent à grant vilté  
Neis li plusur qui l'unt amé.

And she does not hesitate to criticise anyone nor even the court at which she lives:-

Ne pot mie od le tricheur  
Li loiauz Huns avoir honur  
En Cort où l'on voille trichier  
E par mesoigne forjugier.

Again in the fable dou Lion Malade et dou Goupil she says:-

De Cort à Roi est enssement  
Tiens y entre légièrement  
Meiuz li vaudroit plus loinz ester  
Por les nuvelles escuter.

This last "morale" seems like a personal complaint; but so little is known of the writer that we can<sup>not</sup> be certain of it. We know that she lived at the court of England; but why she did is not known.

The only advice which Marie can give the lower classes injured by all this trickery, injustice and cruelty, is to endure. She teaches the serf silent endurance of his wrongs. While she realizes the evils of feudalism she never even suggests



## Eagle's nest. The "moralité" is:-

Par iceste essample entendun  
K'ensi est dou riche Felun,  
Ja dou Pouvre n'aura merci  
Pur sa plainte, ne pur son cri;  
Mais se cil s'en puet vengier  
Dunc le voit-il asoplier  
Cume fist li Aigliz au Gopilz  
Si cum hum cunte en ces esinz.

She does not mean to teach rebellion by this "moralite"; the whole trend of her advice is as has been said above, toward silent endurance, but not passive endurance if there be any means of securing one's rights.

Since the "Seignour" has such great power and since the happiness and misery of his dependants rests largely with him, they should use great care in selecting their lord. There are six fables the "moralites" of which give advice as to this selection: (1) dou Solaus qui volst Fame prendre, (2) li parlemens des Oiseax por faire Roi, (3) d'un Estanc plain de Reines, (4) de l'Os-tor cui les Coulons eslirent a Segnor, (5) dou Lions qui en autre pais volt converser and (6) d'un Homme qui ne voloit fere Oevre. The "moralité" of the first fable of these six is:-

Ainsi chastele li plusor  
Ki seur eaus mettent mal Signors;  
Ki ne les deivent esforcier,  
N'a à plus forz d'eaus acompagnier  
Par lur sens, ne par lur avoir,  
Mès desturbier à lur pooir;  
Cum plus est fort e pis lur fait  
Tuz-jurs lur est ~~ferixs~~ de mal agait.

The fable dou Lions qui ~~exist~~ en autre pais volt converser which is very similar to les ~~Ami~~ Animaux malades de la Peste, has a "moralité" much like the one which has just been quoted:-

Pur ce, li Saiges mustre bien  
Que um ne deit pur nulle rien  
Felun Humme fère Segnur  
Ne traire le à haute honur;  
Jà ne gardera loiauté  
Plus à l'estrange k'au privé  
Si se demeine vers sa gent  
Cum fist li Leuz de sun seirement.

Li Parlemens des Oiseax por faire Roi has this "moralité" on the selection of a "seignur":-

Ensi l'unt fait cum jeo vus di,  
Par cest essample mustre ci  
K'un ne deit pas faire seignur  
De mauvais, ne de gengleur

U il n'a se parole nun;  
 Tel se fait nobles par tencun,  
 E velt menacier à parler  
 Qui moult petit est à douter.

It also shows us an interesting medieval custom; the birds s'as-  
 sanblèrent a Pallement, c'est-a-dire en réunion des premiers  
 membres de l'état. Les assemblées du parlement ainsi nommées,  
 parce qu'on y tratoit des affaires de l'état et non des procès  
 des particuliers datent du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Les parlements étoient  
 ambulatoires; ils se composoient des évêques, des grands officiers  
 de la couronne, des ducs, des comtes, et des barons. Ces assem-  
 blées se tenoient au mois de mars; elles furent abolies par les  
 maires du Palais et ensuite restituées par Pepin-le-gros, père  
 de Charles Martel. Les grands vassaux avoient le pouvoir de créer  
 dans l'étendue de leurs domaines, des parlements qui jugeoient  
 en dernier ressort. - - - - Ce ne fut que sous le règne de le  
 Louis IX, qu'on commença à pouvoir rappeler les jugements des  
 hauts barons, qui à cette époque, tués ou ruinés par les croisades  
 - - - - ne pouvoient l'empêcher. - - - - Enfin sous Philippe IV  
 - - - - les assemblées formèrent les états-généraux. Ce fut  
 le 27 mars 1302, que pour la première fois le tiers-état y fut  
 appelé, et que des-lors le parlement devint sédentaire à Paris.

The idea of royal power and of the qualities necessary for  
 a king which is shown in this fable li parlemens des Oiseax por  
 faire Roi is rather curious. They do not ask much of a king.

- - - -Un roi qui soit vaillant  
 Preux et sage et emprenant,  
 Roi doit être moult droiturier  
 Et en justice roide et fier.

The birds consider the cuckoo for king but reject him and elect  
 the eagle for several reasons:-

Li Aigle a belo grandour,  
 Si ert asseiz de grant valour;  
 Moult et saiges et atrempez,  
 Quant d'une foiz est saoulez  
 Bien puet regemuner après  
 Jà de proie n'iert trop engrès,  
 Prince se doit mie reposer  
 Et ne deit mie tuz-majures pener  
 Lui ne sun regne travelher  
 Ne la povre gent essiller.

Beneath the vassal in social rank and very slightly above  
 the serf was le Franc-homs. Marie's repeated advice to him is  
 to keep his freedom.

Par ceste Fable munstre ci  
 Que chascuns Frans-Huns face autresi  
 Se nus li veult dunner loier  
 U par promesse ~~ne~~ è losengier,  
 Que sun Segnur doie traier



N' el voille mie cunsentir  
 Attendre en deit tel gueirredon  
 Cum li chiens fist dou Lairon.

Also in the fable of la compaignie dou Chien au Leu:-

Par cest essample vus promet  
 Qe cil est mult folx qui se met  
 En sougit o en servitute,  
 Car mauvèse est cele coustume;  
 Qui a sun talent à délivre  
 Ne laisse en pais nul hume vivre.

But it is the serf who occupies the largest place in these fables and under his own name. "On ne prend pas la peine de le déguiser; il figure sous son vrai nom et sous ses traits parmi les acteurs ordinaires. On dirait qu'il est là en famille, à côté des animaux, un peu plus haut, pas beaucoup plus." There are twenty-two fables in the collection in which the serf occurs as one of the characters. He is so heavily burdened and ~~xxx~~ oppressed that he has become almost an animal himself. It is remarkable that although the serf has so large a place in the fables that he has none at all in the "moralités". We have advice given expressly to the lord and the free-man but nowhere in the "moralités" is the serf mentioned. He seems to near the ~~an~~ animal even for ~~the~~ ~~the~~ advice as to his conduct.

The general idea which these fables give us is of the prevalence of evil and wickedness. There is the haughty cruelty and injustice of the vassals and in addition there is a horde of lesser evil doers. For example, this "moralité" to the fable dou Lion, dou Bugle et de un Leu, which is very similar to La Fontaine's la Genisse, la Chèvre, la Brebis en société avec le Lion:-

Autresi est n'en dutez mie;  
 Se Povres hum prent cumpaignie  
 A plus Fort humme k'il ne seit,  
 Jà dou gaaing n'aura espleit;  
 Li Riches volt aveir l'ounur  
 U li Povres perdra s'amur.  
 Se lur gaaig deivent partir  
 Li Riches velt tut retenir.

The fable dou Feyres qui fist une Coingnie which is La Fontaine's la Forêt et le Bûcheron has similar advice:-

Tut autresi est du Malvès,  
 Du Felun Humme et de l'Engrès;  
 Quant un Preudons les met avant,  
 E par lui est riche et manant,  
 Se il puet melx faire de lui  
 Tuz-jurs li funt hunte et anui;  
 A celui funt-il tot le pis,  
 Qui plus les a au dessus mis.

"Cette empreinte vivante du moyen-âge, en ses heures les plus tristes, donne un intérêt et un accent tout particuliers à certaines fables qui parlent de violence, du plus faible écrasé par le plus fort. ~~Chez~~ Chez La Fontaine, elles se confondent volontiers avec les autres; ni l'auteur, ni le lecteur ne leur donnent plus d'attention. Ce sont des leçons de morale qui en valent tant d'autres également vraies, également justes, également importantes; mais elles ne vous frappent pas d'une façon extraordinaire. Lues dans le livre de Marie de France avec le sentiment de ce qu'éprouvait l'auteur, dans ce vieux texte dont ~~l'aspect~~ la forme naïve, les sons rudes et encore incultes évoquent devant nous le passé, elles produisent un tout autre effet."

We feel ourselves taken back to this old time which was not always "le bon vieux temps". ~~For~~ The words and expressions suggest the times of chivalry. And back of everything we feel the sorrow of this poet of the XIIth century for all its cruelty. "Nous revoyons le peuple écrasé et meurtri, la foule sacrifiée au petit nombre, le brigandage et l'éternel combat. Une fois ramenées dans ce milieu, ces vieux contes ont un intérêt étrange."

The difference in social conditions of the XIIth and XIIIth centuries has modified the characters of the fables of those two centuries. La Fontaine wrote at a time when the government had become sufficiently well established to assure protection from most of the injustice and evils common in the XIIth century; the fable of the earlier age which is filled with the groanings of those oppressed by a feudal government is therefore very different. There is no apparent attempt to arouse the interest by charm of narration or poetic beauty.

La Fontaine says of his fables :-

C'est une comédie aux cent actes divers.

And we may say of Marie de France's Isopet that it is a drama, with all its dangers, its treacherous actions, its darkness and sadness.

There is one thing that is conspicuously absent in the Isopet of Marie de France when we compare it with the Isopets of the XIIIth and XIVth centuries. That is religious teaching. There are only two fables in Marie's collection which have a "morale" with advice regarding one's relations with God. One, the fable du Laiton et d'une Sorcière, has a "moralité" directed against one of the evils of the middle ages: the belief in sorcery.

Pur ce chasti-jeu tute gent  
 Qui ne creient Diex leur deffent  
 En aigu ne en sorcherie  
 Quar trahis est qui si affie.  
 Li cors en est mis a escell,  
 L'arme en vait a grant périll.  
 Geo quit que jamais ci n'aura  
 Qui en sorcerie croira.

The other is the fable de uns riches Hons, and the "moralité" is:-

Li Sages deit resnablement  
Prier a Dieu omnipotent  
Que de lui face sun plaisir;  
De ce li puet grant bien venir.  
Car miex Diex que li estuet,  
Que ses cuers qui cange et muet.

(B) On the other hand the majority of the fables in the Isopet de Lyon and the Isopet I have some religious teaching in the "moralé". The authors of these two Isopets were probably monks and wrote their fables with a didactic purpose. Since it was religious ideas that they were teaching we find their "morales" characterized by the frequency of religious ideas.

If we turn now to the Isopet de Lyon which was written probably a century later than the Isopet of Marie de France, we find a great change in ideas and in the way of expressing them. There are none of the special "morales" so frequent in Marie de France. And there is a remarkable absence of references to social conditions and customs. The writer of this Isopet was apparently a monk and his life in the monastery was so shut off from worldly things that it is natural that his ~~writings~~ fables should contain few references ~~to social conditions~~ to social conditions. Moreover, he translated his Latin original too literally to give us many of the details that make the Isopet of Marie so interesting.

There is nothing definite known of the author of the Isopet de Lyon but there seems to be little doubt that he was a monk; the whole tone of the Isopet suggests a person living away from worldly conditions and interesting himself in thoughts on religious subjects. The prologue which was quoted in the first part of this paper, shows the purpose of the author to teach morals to the laymen.

The writer of the Isopet I was also a monk, but he ~~lived~~ lived at the court and wrote sermons in the form of fables to interest his aristocratic hearers, and seems to avoid giving them lessons that would worry them. The writer of the Isopet de Lyon on the other hand gives no evidences of life at court in his collection and he does not hesitate to give morals the following of which would be difficult. He teaches nobler lessons than the author of Isopet I.

The author of the Isopet de Lyon turns his "morales" very easily into sermons. The fable 'du chien qui porte la piece de char en sa boice' furnished a text for a sermon:-

En vivant ai dou chien la guise,  
Qui s'esperance ou monde ai mise;  
Quar li moides, ce est une ombre

Qui dou verai bien nos descombre.  
 Qui l'un quiert, ce doiz tu savoir,  
 L'autre ne puet il pas avoir.  
 Ne laissier les choses certaines  
 Por querre celes qui sont vaines.  
 Tost passe dou mont la figure,  
 Ce dit sainz Pous en l'escripture.  
 Auuec ce pour loi de nature  
 Chose engendre petit dure.  
 Tout retourne a corrupcion,  
 Quanqu'est pour generacion.  
 Ou ciel dois donc, non pas en terre,  
 Chose qui touz iours dure querre.  
 Ce qui est tuens certainnement,  
 Garde ne perdes folemant.  
 Qui quiert ce qui ne li pertient,  
 Droiz x est qu'il perde ce qu'il tient.

The "morale" of the curious fables dou mercheant et de l'asne is also a sermon. The poor donkey is worked and beaten to death and then is not allowed to rest for

Fit li merchanz de la pel faire  
 Cimbales, ou clochates pendent,  
 A tochier des doiz douz sous randent.  
 Et grant tabours que l'on suet batre,  
 Quant l'on essamble por combatre.  
 Ensinc de l'asne morte et vive  
 Puit en poinne la pel chaitive.

The fable is interpreted in this unusual way:-

Li asnes qu'est sanz connoissance,  
 Ce est arme sanz conscience.  
 Li mercheanz, c'est li deables  
 Qu'est souduanz et decevables.  
 Et cilz mondes, ce est la foire,  
 Ou l'on trove pou de foi voire.  
 Ceste foire son paiement  
 Aura au jour dou iugement,  
 Quant dex les mavaiz punira  
 Et les bons regulerdonera.  
 Li deables l'arme merchanse,  
 Qui sor tout cestui gain demande.  
 Auuec soi vuet que soit dampnee  
 Cele qui dex ai rachetee.  
 A chaitis cors honours autesces  
 Promet et delit et richesses.  
 Certes, ci ai fausse monoie  
 Que cilz merchanz a cors presante.  
 - - - - -  
 Fausse monoie en ha recue,  
 Sa desserte l'en iert rendue.  
 Livree en sert a dampnement,





Sanz porter aïche ne visarme  
Son fil amoinne l'andemain.

The serpent kills both and the author adds this "morale":-

Cil qui une foiz m'a malmis,  
Saïche ne sui pais ses amis.  
Pou me mit sa fause amistie,  
Puis que ie voi sa mavistie.  
Die cil fol ne s'en percoit,  
Se la seconde me decoit.  
En home qu'est de foi muable,  
C'est frere chose domaiable.  
Qui se repent de sa folie,  
le ~~de~~ li perdoins per cortoisie;  
Quar de pardon doit auoir grace  
Cil qui de bon cuer lo porchace.  
Qui unefois m'a volu nuire  
Et puis apres me cuide cuire,  
Li premiers mesfait estimer,  
~~Qu~~ Qu'a secon me vuet venimer.

However, there is a very interesting fable with a lesson in gratitude, the fable dou lion que l'espine naura cu pie. The lion is unable to remove the thorn and meeting a shepherd "son pie li mostre et li deprie que li aidoit per cortoisie." The shepherd removes ~~xxx~~ the thorn and

Li lions, quar la main li baise,  
La main tot entort a sa boïche,  
En baisant doucement li toïche.  
Li pastres demore en son part,  
Et li lyons de lui se part.  
En son cuer note la samblance  
Dou pastour per grant deligence.  
Grace qu'est bien enracinee  
Ne puet estre tost ebliee.

After several years the lion is captured and taken to Rome "por faire iustise". The shepherd too, has been taken to Rome charged with some misdeed and is put for punishment in the cage of lions. One of ~~the~~ lions is the one that he had helped.

Li lyons reconoit sa face,  
Si lo recoillet doucement  
Por ce que nuns mal ne li face,  
N'a pas obliee la grace  
Que cil li fist tant bonement.

The lion tells his companions what the shepherd has done for him and they do not harm him.

L'andemain por doner pasture  
vient es lions cil qui les garde,  
De ceste novele aventure  
S'esbakist mout, quant le regarde.  
Esbaie fust la citey,

Quant oient ceste veritey.

The lion and the shepherd are set free and:-

Il examples nos done entendro  
quo qui vuet grace recevoir,  
en leu et en tens le doit rendre,  
Non pais son ami decevoir.  
Li communs proverbes te mande  
C'neunne bonte autre demande.

In all the fables that have just been quoted the changes which the ~~XXXXXX~~ "morale" has undergone in the century between Marie de France and the writer are very noticeable. Marie makes each fable apply to some particular wrong which occurs in the society in which she lives and she goes straight to the point in the fewest possible words. Nowhere is there a "morale" in the Isopet of Marie de France which is long and tedious. Here on the contrary we rarely find one which is not verbose.

We notice the absence of reference to social conditions. There are a few details that have as it were, crept in unnoticed by the author. The pride of ~~xxx~~ the XIIIth century 'Seignor' is expressed in the fable dou cengler et de l'asne. The donkey says:-  
"Dex te saut, frere! when he should have said: "Dex vous saut, sire!"  
and:-

Li ceinglers entent la parole,  
Per matalent la teste en crole,  
Sanz respondre la teste en vire,  
Dedanz soi fremit per grant ire  
S'il n'eust temprey son corroz  
Ja fust li fols asnes derouz,  
Dit li pors: "Ta vie en respit  
Met ie soulemant per despit.  
Nuns iugeroit ce a proesce  
Se ma force voint ta paresce.  
Ma noble dent pas ne demande  
Morsel de si orde viande.  
Dex ne place que si vil chose  
Dedanz ma pance soit enclose.  
Ta vilez est ort de saison,  
Aler t'en puez en ta maison."

There are a few "morales" expressly for ~~xxx~~ the seignour; the fable dou lion ancien has one .

Folx est qui amis ne procure.  
Mout tost se treive au desoz mis,  
Qui ne est apuiez d'amis.  
Por ce dit l'on :- Nuez vaut en voie  
Amis que denier en corroie.  
Ou tens de ta prosperitey  
Te soviegne d'aversitey.  
Garde quo per ta seignorie  
N

Ne faces autrui vilonie;  
 Quar fortune qui te norrit  
 Et te samble qu'ele te rit,  
 Se sor toi vuet sa main changier,  
 Bien se puet l'on de toi vangier.

The "morale" of the fable de la berbiz, de la vaiche, de la chievre et dou lyon is so very similar to the "morale" of the same fable in Marie de France's collection that one might think that the author of the Isopet de Lyon knew her fable. The "morale" of the XIIIth century fable is:-

Gilz exemples bien nos ensoigne,  
 Que nuns a plus fort ne se proigne.  
 Plus fort de lui acompaignier  
 Ne doit nuns hons qui vuet gaignier.  
 De soi ne garde fermety  
 Richesce contre poveretey.  
 Force ne set garder droiture  
 Et richesce n'airme mesure.

Marie de France's "morale" is:-

Einsi est-il n'en dutez mie;  
 Mult s'entremet de grantfolie  
 Q'a plus fort de lui s'acumpaigne;  
 Ni puet faire pas grant gaigne.

In the XIIIth century riches seem to have been of as much value in securing justice as in the XIIth. With money a somewhat peaceable existence could be secured. Without money, a man was exposed to all manner of wrongs. The fable dou chien et de la ~~ber~~ burbiz is as sad in this Isopet as it is in Marie's. We feel that in this century too, there is great injustice and cruelty. The free-man is in danger of being forced into serfdom. In the fable dou lou, de la berbiz et dou corbeal the author gives four evils which can make even a brave heart fear and one is

Li hons frans que ne soit submise  
 A vil servitut sa franchise.

The poor man may secure his rights by arousing fear:-

Li plus grant per force estriver  
 Lo petit ne doit ne grever.  
 En petit cors git bien grant arme  
 Qui per sent contre lo grant s'arme.

The larger number of ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ the fables, however, have a "morale" expressing some bit of philosophy. There is a serious effort to study the human heart. For example:-

Hols est qui a ce s'abandone,  
 Que sa nature ne li done;



Quar communement mal en prant,  
 Li faiz soi meisme reprant.  
 Cilz qui ne connoit son affaire  
 En ce desplait, qu'il cuide plaire.  
 Or again in the fable des renouilles que demandant furent roi:-

Des choses ne set la bontey,  
 Qui les ai a sa velontey  
 Apres chose amere gostee  
 Samble estre la bone socree.  
 Maingier aincois ce qu'est amer  
 Fait puis la douceur miez amer  
 Sa vie en grant ioie maintient,  
 Qui a cou qu'a lui apertient.  
 Qui vuet estrange chose querre,  
 Son repos vuet muer en guerre.  
 Qui puet estre de franc coraige,  
 Ne s'obligoit a mal servaige.

The "morale" of ~~the fable~~ the fable des liebres et des renouilles  
 is on the subject of fear:-

Cuers qu'est paourous per nature  
 Se dote chose qu'est segure.  
 -----  
 Esperance lo cuer relieve  
 Que paour trop soutement grieve.  
 Per esperance fort reprise  
 Est munte victoire conquise;  
 Quar de mort furent en balance  
 Mainz que puis salue esperance.

The fable dou lou qui trovai la teste pointe gives us the  
 author's opinion of the value of knowledge:-

Sanz la bontey de sapience  
 Vaut pou de beautey la semblance.  
 Quant li cuer n'a de senz lumiere  
 Pou vaut la beaute de la chiere;  
 Quar li senz doit ~~en~~ estre ou coraige,  
 Qui reluire doit ou visaige.

The writer of this Isopet lived in an age of didacticism  
 with a vengeance. It was the same century that the Roman de la  
 Rose was written. And several of the collections known as Bes-  
 tiaires, Lapidaires and Images du monde all of which are very  
 didactic belong to the same age. We have numerous examples of the  
 authors didactic intention throughout the collection.

Tu qui ceste fables proposes,  
 I puez bien noter quatre choses;  
 Tout premiers que hons exilliez  
 Ne soit trop segurs ne trop liez.  
 Il doit ~~en~~ touz iours estre en regart,  
 Metier li fait de tout segart.

Cil qui ont des autres la cure  
 Doivent ovrer per grant mesure.  
 Voillier doivent por porveance,  
 Non pas dormir per negligence.  
 Ne soi n'atruï set consoillier  
 Cuers lenz qui bien ne set voillier  
 Li sers qui autrui bien despensent  
 Dorment, ronchent, que riens ne pansent.  
 Il s'engraissent d'autrui viande,  
 Ce font que la char lour demande.  
 Pitie, mere de cortoisie  
 Ensoigne a faire autrui haie,  
 En cortoisie et en bontey  
 Se deduit noble voluntee.  
 Mais li vilains sers touz enraige,  
 Quant il fait autrui avantaige.

In spite of all the long "morales" in the Isopet de Lyon we do not get as clear a picture of the XIIIth century as we do of the XIIth from the short concise "morales" of Marie de France. From the few glimpses we get of XIIIth century ~~conditions~~, we may conclude that social conditions have not changed much since the time that Marie de France wrote; and from the general characteristics of the two Isopets that the different social position of the two writers has been the cause of the very great differences between their fables. The poet of the XIIth century saw its ~~er~~ cruelties and sadness and pictured it; the poet of the XIIIth lived away from the world and saw less of the evils of society than his predecessor. Moreover, he translated his model too literally to give us many original ideas.

(C) In the XIVth century there are two Isopets of very distinct characteristics. The Isopet I is much more interesting and gives many more details about the century than the Isopet II. The author of Isopet I was an ~~ecclesiastix~~ ecclesiastic living at the court of John, duke of Normandy. His aim in writing his fables was to teach his aristocratic hearers lessons in morals in an interesting way. He neglects no opportunity to arrive at a pious "morale". From the flattery of the crow by the fox, he draws the "morale":-

Que vaine gloire croist et chasse,  
 Sa porte et sa honte pourchasce:  
 Fausse honneur, se povés entendre,  
 Maint grant anui souvent engendre;  
 Les fos qui quierrent vaine gloire  
 Si vuellent assez honte boire  
 Gloire les met hors de leur san.

And again, in the fable des Lievres qui s'enfuioient, we find a "morale" on the value of hope that seems to have no connection with the fable:-

Esperance a mains a valu:  
 Ainsi elle est voye de salu.

Paoureux sommes sans raison;  
 Cremi si nous donne achoison,  
 De craindre; il estuet que je dise  
 Legierez et couardise  
 Par legiers sommes et couart:  
 Car quiconques craint, si segart,  
 Que il l'esperance n'eschieve;  
 Car sans li est peur trop grieve.  
 Tel ~~x~~ est sauvé par esperance,  
 Qui de morir fust en doutance;  
 Et tieux, sans li, mors, ce m'est vis,,  
 Qui o li fust encores vis.  
 Desesperance l'esbahie  
 Fait homme au diable enlacier,  
 Quant il se tuent par acier,  
 Par fer, par baston ou par corde.  
 C'est la plus perilleuse et orde  
 Qu'est contre debonnaireté  
 De Dieu et sa bñignité:  
 Ja pardonnés n'ieit ce pechiez,  
 Qui est de tous meschiez  
 Par li, li dons saint Esperis  
 N'est amés, requis ne cheris.

Another moral lesson is drawn from the fable of the Ant and the Fly:-

Villonie si veult oïr  
 Qui vilonnie dit ou lait.  
 Langue amer homme ou hair fait.  
 Qui biau dit, biau oïr pourra:  
 Biau die, qui dire vourra  
 La langue qui est venimeuse  
 Response n'aura gracieuse.  
 Male langue haine engendre:  
 Nourrit en mour com feu en sendre.  
 - - - - -  
 Se nous croire voulons l'apostre  
 Langue refrainmons qui est nostre;  
 Et se le sage salemon  
 En ce dialecte reclamon,  
 Trouverons qui dit: Tres hassens,  
 Harviens homme perescens,  
 Va au fremmi, ce dit mon livre,  
 Qui sceut amasser pour soui vivre;

In this Isopet also, we find an unusual Christian teaching; it is<sup>the</sup> the "morale" of the fable du Renard et de la Segogne:-

Mais au tricheur qui sa foy ~~menx~~ ment  
 Faire doit on semblablement;  
 Sus celi qui fait tricherie  
 Reviengne barat et bordie.

This fabulist was so carried away by his moralizin that he writes "morales" of several hundred verses. There is an unusually long one in the fable des contens du Ventre et des Membres where he seems to try to correct in one sermon all the vices of society.

This writer who lived at the court and probably sought distinction by winning the favor of king, queen and princes does not teach any very elevating doctrine, nor one that is difficult to follow. Thrift, economy, humility, moderation are the favorite virtues with him. His wisdom is very commonplace. There are no high ideals taught; no great sacrifices. The fabulist seeks a comfortable life and does not hesitate to secure by flattery or by any other means the protection of those who can give it. ~~ix~~ In le Chêne et le Roseau, he gives this ~~maxim~~ "morale":-

Quand vois plus fort que moi venir  
Vers qui je ne me puis tenir  
N'ai pas honte de moi baissir.

-----  
Beaux enclins ne me coûtent rien.

And in the fable du Cerf qui besmoit ses jambes, we find a sort of resume of the author's moral teaching:-

Ne quiers pas toujours ton plaisir,  
Profiter et toy aisier:  
Par ce viendras tu a richesse:  
Ne te tiegne nulle peresce:  
Se tu veuls toujours deliter  
Et toute curation jeter,  
Ne mener la vie delitable,  
Un grand despens et grande table,  
Et tu ni mets atemprement,  
Sois certain et croi fermement,  
Tart re sera du repentir.

-----  
Atrempe toy selon ta rente,  
Que pauvreté ne t'aggrave,  
Et ne t'en fais pas en accroire  
Ne en pompes n'en vaines gloire.  
De l'autrui ne t'en fais si gobes  
N'en viandes ni en belles robes;  
Car ilconvient l'escot paier.  
Pour ce te dois bien esmaier,  
Quant despens plus que n'as assés,  
Ces dis n'oses pas trespasés.

He teaches obedience to those in power:-

Li fors li plus fort traingue et ainc  
Et qui plus fort est, ades vainc  
Le plus foible doit obeir  
Au plus fort et le conjoir.  
A tous seigneurs, toutes honneurs:  
Les grans redouttent les meneurs.



Il ne fait pas bon courroucier  
 Plus grant de lui, ne agroucier;  
 Mes doit l'en honorer le prince,  
 Soit qu'il oigne ou que il pince.

This collection of fables shows that this fabulist too, sees a great many evils about him. Several ~~fixat~~ fables have a lesson for the evildoers, mostly of the lower classes.

Tout ainsi fait le mauvais hom;  
 Achoison sans cause pourchasce  
 Comment au preudhomme mefface.  
 Qui veult faire division  
 De l'ami tost quiert aschoison,  
 Met sus à son ami la raige,  
 Si com nous tesmoigne le saige.

The cry of the frogs devoured by their king in the fable des Raines qui voudrent avoir Roy, sounds like a real cry; perhaps similar to one that the author has heard many times.

- - - - - Lasses! que nous ferons?  
 Aide Dieu, que nous mourons!  
 Lasses! nostre roy nous mengue;  
 Cy a mal roi qui ses gens tue.

On the whole however, we feel that social conditions are much better. The bourgeois is more independent and more certain of securing his rights. The fable du Singe, du Renart et du Lievre shows the great change that has occurred in enforcing the laws. The people have learned to have some confidence in the protection of royal power against unjust lords. The fable of Marie de France dou Chien e d'une Berbis is in general the same as this one; but in her fable the lamb has no protection at all. This fable du Singe, du Renart et du Lievre is one of the best in the Isopet I. It is interesting in expressions and details.

Devant le singe fist remondre  
 Renart le lievre a lui respondre  
 D'une gelline grasse et grosse  
 Que cil li embla dans la fosse;  
 Ainsi dit renart, s'il ne mont.  
 La li lievres contreement  
 Respont à ce que il propose  
 Que ne li embla nulle chose.  
 Et dit oras talent n'en avoit.  
 Quant renart ce oï tant et voit,  
 Qui n'a tesmoing qui dier lui doie,  
 En jugement son genou ploie,  
 Contre le lievre tant son gaige.

This is a characteristic medieval fashion.xx xx

Et cil qui parle comme saige,  
 Se prist courtoisement a saige;

Sauve votre grace, beau sire,  
 Gaige de bataille, en ce cas,  
 Je cuide qu'il n'affiere pas:  
 Car, par l'ordenance royal,  
 S'il n'a presontion loyal,  
 Cheval nen iert ja en selle  
 Contre seli qui est appole;  
 Ou s'il n'i a mehain ou mort,  
 Ou p trahison pour homme mort,  
 Ou s'ossement n'est brisié.  
 Encor tout ce n'est point prisé,  
 Se l'en puet trouver tesmoignage,  
 A donques n'i puet escheoir gage,  
 Si le cas n'est si evidables  
 Que par lui soit uns homs pendables.  
 Tu ne demandes qu'une poule  
 Dont tu voulois fourrer la goule:  
 Ne valoit que douse deniers,  
 Tournois ou parisis peliers;  
 Or ne doit-on un home pendre,  
 Se la chose ne puet-on vendre  
 Plus de V souls, qui est emblée,  
 Selon commune renommée;  
 Ainsi le tient l'assertion  
 De disieme collation  
 Drois ne veult que pour larrecin  
 Mette l'en personne a la fin,  
 Se n'est larron de renommée  
 Qu'en doit pendre a fourche levée.  
 J'en demande drois a la court.  
 Li juges qui voit bien le hourt,  
 Et la deliauté renart  
 Et cogneust sa guille et son art,  
 Et vit bien par presoncion  
 Qu'il avoit mauvaise accion  
 Si commende que il se taise;  
 Car ila querelle mauvaise.  
 Le lievres mot bien ennui  
 Pour ce proposes contre lui.  
 Preudomme est et de bonne vie.  
 De toy maufaire n'a envie  
 Faites pais et bonne accordance.  
 Simplesses si est demonstrence  
 En personne de verité;  
 Et barat vient de fausseté.  
 Hommes qui s'acointe et apresse  
 Mauvaistié, a poine la laisse.

If all the fables in this Isopet were as thoroughly medieval in expressions and customs, we would have a more entertaining collection. There is another fable, *du Renard et du Loup* that also has several interesting details. This fable in the Isopet I shows the influence of the Roman de Renard. A fable on

the same subject occurs in the Isopet de Lyon and the resemblance between the two is very close; however there is a difference in their use of names for the animals. The author of the fable in the Isopet de Lyon uses the terms 'voulpil' or 'goupil' and 'loup' throughout. In the Isopet I, the wolf is called 'Sire Esangrin', which is his name in the Roman de Renard. He is "connétable à la cour du lion" which is his function in the Roman. The fox is always Renard and never 'voulpil' as in the earlier fable.

In addition to these two animals as characters in this fable there is a vilen. Here as in the Isopet of Marie he seems to be considered as little better than an animal. In fact, Renard speaks patronizingly to him.

Escoutes moy, dit-il, bovier,  
Et tu en auras tel loyer  
Que le loup ton grant ennemi  
Auras tost à l'ayde de mi  
Je te bailleraï de voir.  
Je vois devant, or viens après;  
Je te le monstreré de près.

The resemblance between these two fables in the Isopet de Lyon and in the Isopet I is as has just been said very close. This is true of the majority of the fables in the collections, for both are translations or rather paraphrases of the same Latin Isopet. Since the "morales" represent in most cases the writers own thoughts, we would expect considerable differences in them. There is almost a century between the two Isopets and the position of the two fabulists was so different, although their aim was similar. However there are several "morales" which are almost identical. For example the "morale" of the fable dou loin ancien in the Isopet de Lyon:-

- - - - - Muez vaut en voie  
Ains que denier en corvoie.  
Ou tens de ta prosperitey  
Te soviengne d'aversitey.  
Garde que per ta soignorie  
Ne faces autrui villonie;  
Quar fortune qui te norrit  
Et te semble qu'ele te rit,  
Se sor toi vuet sa main changier,  
Bien se puet l'on de toi vangier.

And in the Isopet I :-

Bien se gart de ceste aventure  
Cil qui de faire amis n'a cure,  
Et qui, en sa prosperite,  
Ne veult du povre avoir pitié  
Et voudroit bien que l'en eust  
De li, se ainsy li mescheut.

- - - - -

La fortune qui est jeient  
Preuve les amis pour nient.

There is such an absence of anything individual in either of these collections that we can not distinguish whether one of the fables is XIIIth or XIVth century unless we know previously to which Isopet it belongs. The complete absence of individual traits is very characteristic of the medieval fable.

There is one fable in the IsopetI which differs from other fables on the same subject in that it has a story to show the practical application of the fable. It is the fable d'un Serpent qui rungoit au dens une Lime. The fable itself is similar in detail to La Fontaine's le Serpent et la Lime and then ~~we have this~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ the fabulist says:-

Je vueil une soutiveté,  
Cy recounter en verité,  
Qu'avint a Paris en tour prime:  
Secu fut n fait par une lime.  
Bon compaignon de Picardie  
Là menoient trop bonne vie;  
Quant leur fu faillie pecune  
Et chevance n'eurent ocune,  
L'un deus dedans S. Matherin,  
Se fist porter en a l'escrin;  
Une lime enclose yot;  
Là de l'escrin fu fait depot  
Pour les autres escrins rober,  
Pour eulz reveler et joer:  
Quant il entra en son escrin,  
La lime oblie, et le matin  
L'en rapportent si compaignon:  
Or tost, fait-il or nous baignon  
Et joons en belles estuves,  
En biaux lis et en belles cuves.  
Li frere ne furent pas nice:  
Tantost corans a la justice.  
Tout droit vont a l'official,  
Et li vont conter tout le mal,  
Et li fu la lime baillie.  
Li official lors estude  
Comment pulse ce fait savoir  
Et le deposit emble ravoir:  
Lors apella un garçonnet:  
Va t'en, dit-il, enfansonnet,  
Pois que tu dois a St. Fraubert,  
Tout droit a la place Maubert,  
Et di: Ceste lime vueil vendre:  
Or en puet-on bon marché prendre.  
Plus e trois sol de Paris  
N'en vouloit prendre li petis:  
Car il li estoit deferd~~neu~~;  
Si ne fu l'instrumens vendu.



Cils qui le fist, moult la blasma,  
 Et mauvais garçon le clama.  
 Et li dit: Tres mauvais scufflet  
 - - -que manuisés de moufflet  
 Façonnée l'ai, par St. Guéris,  
 Pour il soulz de bon parisis.  
 Veust-tu regaignier a revendre?  
 L'enfançon ne veult plus atendre,  
 Tous raconta au vaillant homme,  
 Et ceci fust une ~~f~~ grant somme  
 Rendue de ce qui est emblé:  
 Car sergent furent asemblé,  
 Prindrent le fevre en sa maison.  
 Sires, fait-il, faites raison;  
 Les escoliers vous monstreré,  
 Si delivres estre devré,  
 Qui ma lime ont achetée;  
 S'en faites ce qui vous agréé.  
 Li fait fust cogna pour notoire:  
 Li official en ~~at~~ grant gloire.

There is ~~is~~ not much connection between the ~~xxx~~ story and the fable but the writer seems to have taken much pleasure in telling it. It is somewhat difficult to understand ~~xxxxx~~ in parts but gives an interesting picture of a phase of life in Paris in the XIVth century.

This collection of fables is less poetical than the Isopet of Marie de France; on the whole the XIVth century is less poetical than the XIIth or even the XIIIth. The unquestioning faith in the Church and the beautiful sentiments of chivalry in its prime are lost in the XIVth. century. The nobility has been lowered and the middle classes have not elevated themselves. The whole tone of the Isopet I is exceedingly common and vulgar. There are almost no noble sentiments expressed.

(D) This same thing is true of the other Isopet of ~~xxx~~ the XIVth century, the Isopet II. This collection is the least interesting of the medieval Isopets. It is probably a translation of the Latin fables of Alexandre Neckam, an English writer who died in 1215. Nothing at all is known of the author of the Isopet II and his fables show even less of individuality than do the other Isopets; consequently, little can ~~be~~ be conjectured about him.

The "morales" throughout the collection are short; there are very few which are longer than a six verse stanza. I<sup>st</sup> this it differs greatly from the Isopet I and the Isopet de Lyon. The "morale" is often pious as for example in the fable comment le Paon se courrouce de ce qu'il ne chante comme faist le Rossignol:-

Celi qui a envie  
 D'autrui, fait grant folie,  
 Et si, vit a douleur:

Tout doit à chascun plaire  
Que Jesu Christ veut faire,  
Qui est vrai createur.

Les riches conteront  
Les biens qu'il aront  
En ce siecle conquis.  
Cil qui petit ara,  
De petit contera  
Au Roy de paradis.

Qui vit en povreté,  
Sans point d'iniquité,  
Moult ara grant richesse  
Es cieus en paradis,  
O dieux et ses amis,  
Seront joyeux et aise.

Sometimes the teaching in the "morale" is very remarkable as in the fable de li compaignons dont l'un ot grans dons pour menter et l'autre mourut pour voir dire. The two 'bachelers' are told by the king of the monkeys to tell their true opinion. The first one says:-

Sire, il Wa roy en terre  
Qui peust tenir guerre  
A vous ne a vos gens  
Vous estes plus puissans  
Et bel et avenans  
Et plus c'un autres gens.

vostre chevalerie  
Est de biauté garnie  
De bonté et de sens.  
Chascuns a courtoisie  
En son cuer herbergie  
Qui maindra a tous temps.

And he receives great rewards. The second tells the truth and is killed. This is the ~~xxxx~~ "morale" which the fabulist gives:-

Mentir pour gré avoir  
Vault miex que dire voir  
Et perdre corps et vie.  
Voir dire sans domage  
Devroit tout homme sage:  
Car mentir est folie.

There are several "morales" showing observation of human nature and a beginning of philosophic thought. The fable comment le Leu trouve un Asne qui gisoit en l'pre dolant et met aigné et li Leus qui le voloit mangier ot grant pitié de li pour la povreté qu'il avoit; si li laisser aler, has this "morale":-

Se ~~xx~~ un bon desloyal  
Se repentoit du mal  
Qu'avoit fait en sa vie,  
Tout le bien qu'il feroit  
Des gens tenusseroit  
Mal et ypocrisie.

Chascuns se doit garnir  
En son premier venir  
De bien faire et savoir:  
Homs de mauvais renom,  
Traître ne larron  
Ne pot honour avoir.

One of the fables in the Isopet has a very ironical description of a serf. It is ~~in~~ the fable comment l'gant vilain Pelé fiert de sa main une Mouche qui le mort sus sa teste et l'ataine mout forment.

Un grant vilain pole  
Gras et bien saoulé,  
S'assist en sa maison  
Un haterel devant.  
L'ala souvent poignant,  
Ou vibot ou taon.

Un cop jeta en vain  
Le vilain de sa main  
Sur sa teste polce;  
Malement ce bleça,  
La mouche n'atoucha  
Dont point ne li agré.

La mouche se traverse  
Poignant fust et diverse,  
C'estoit contre la mort;  
Le vilain aticha  
Et il se courrouca  
Et li dit qu'il a tort.

Il la cuida ferir;  
Mais il sot bien fouir  
Et grunchier, en volant.  
Une très grande paucée  
S'est le vilain donnée  
A haterel devant.

Il en jeta un ~~xxi~~ ris;  
Il jura saint Denis,  
Que tant i ruera  
Qu'en aucune maniere,  
Ou devant ou derriere,  
A ferme l'atteindra.

Il l'atteint sur sa tête,  
 Si n'en fist pas grand fête:  
 Ains ferit en seursaut.  
 Toute l'a eschiée:  
 La teste on fust coillée  
 Dessus le front en haut.

This is the most complete description of a serf that is given in any of the fables; but from the suggestions that occur in various fables in each of the Isopets, he seems to have been very much the same in the three centuries. However if we go to the fables of the XVIIIth century and notice the peasants, ~~xxx~~ in La Fontaine's fables we find that considerable changes have been brought about. But, ~~xxx xxx~~ in spite of changes in social conditions the serf of the XIIIth and the peasant of the XVIIIth century resemble in character.

### Conclusions.

In comparing these five collections of fables, the four Isopets of the middle ages fall naturally into one group in contrast with La Fontaine's fables. Especially is this true if we compare the "morales". The medieval poems give "morales" for certain classes of people living under certain social conditions, while La Fontaine gives a system of philosophy for mankind in any age or in any place. Like his great contemporary, Moliere, he describes humanity and attempts to depict the customs and characteristics of men and to reproduce a picture of human life. And he teaches through this representation of human life a philosophy similar to Moliere's. "Il n'y a pas à nier que la morale qu'on peut ~~xxxxx~~ tirer des Fables - - - est une morale épicurienne. L'idéal du poète est un idéal de vie facile, naturelle, instinctive";

In the medieval fable on the other hand, while the philosophic thought in the "morale" is often general the application is to the peculiar conditions existing at that time. The teachings are expressly for certain classes of society of the XIIth, XIIIth and XIVth centuries. In these fables man is not considered in his individual character but in his relations with other men. Since these relations were usually in war or in some struggle against injustice, we have a majority of the fables treating those subjects. This is especially true of the Isopet of Marie de France. In the XIIIth and XIVth centuries the government was more firmly established and there was some protection given by the laws. ~~The~~ The scholar had time to think of man as an individual and to ~~xx~~ think of his moral development.

The mania for moralizing became prevalent and as the fable offered a special field for it, we have very long "morales". Each fabulist strove to display ingenuity in the interpretation of his allegory. Since the writers of the Isopets, excepting Marie de France, were monks they almost invariably turn their



in La Fontaine. The French fable in its early forms frequently shows the art of the story-teller; it is entertaining and full of picturesque details and expressions. The fable du Renard et du Corbel in the XIVth century collections shows some traits similar to the lively and picturesque fable of La Fontaine--le Corbeau et le Renard:-

Maistre Corbeau sur un arbre perché  
Tenait en son bec un fromage.  
Maistre Renard par l'odeur alleché  
Lui tint a peu près ce langage,  
Et bon jour, Monsieur du Corbeau,  
Que vous êtes joli! Que vous me semblez beau!  
Sans mentir si votre ramage  
Se rapporte a votre plumage  
Vous êtes le Phoenix des hostes de ces bois.  
A ces mots le Corbeau ne se sent pas de joye:  
Et pour montrer sa belle voix,  
Il ouvre ~~un~~ un large bec, laisse tomber sa proye.  
Le Renard s'en saisit, et dit: Mon bon Monsieur  
Apprenez que tout flatteur  
Vit aux dépens de celui qui l'écoute.  
Cette leçon vaut bien un fromage sans doute.  
Le Corbeau honteux et confus  
Jura, mais un plus tard, qu'on ne l'y prendroit plus.

We find several descriptive phrases in the old fables which resemble La Fontaine's and one which is quite like his. In the Isopet I, the fable begins:-

Sire Thiercelin le corbiau,  
Qui cuide estre avenant et biau,  
Tenoit en son bec un fromage.

and a similar expression occurs in the Isopet de Lyon:-

A vulpil cui fain destroignoit  
Li corbeas encontre uenoit,  
Portant en son bec un fromaige.

We notice in the first of these quotations from the Isopets the <sup>influence</sup> effect of the Roman de Renard, in the titles which are given the animals. In the Latin fables we never find the proper name used. La Fontaine sometimes uses the old French title and at others the word of Latin origin. In this fable he uses the Latin title throughout, in speaking of the crow.

The flattery which the Fox gives the Crow in each of the old fables reminds one of La Fontaine's:-

Doumage iert que ne chantes  
Aussi bien com fist votre pere:  
Se ainsi chantiez, par saint pere  
Je cuid' qu'en tout le bois n'eust  
Oisel qui tant a tous pléust.

In the Isopet de Lyon, the flattery is very clever:-

"Dex vous saut, dit Renars, beas frere!  
Moult resamblez bien vostre pere  
En noblesce, en sent, en valour,  
En blanche et en fresche colour."

Rosseau says of this fable:- "Le vers est admirable, l'harmonie  
de La Fontaine's

seule en fait image. Je vois un grand vilain bec ouvert; j'entends tomber le fromage à travers les branches! La Fontaine has used imitative harmony in this poem. The words s'en saisit" for instance are an imitation of sound. It is almost impossible to pronounce the three syllables slowly, and the rapidity shows the eagerness of the fox to seize the cheese.

The art of the poet of suggesting by the sounds of his words the idea, is lacking entirely in the old fables. The familiar terms which are so frequent in La Fontaine are very rare in the medieval fable. The Latin fables were translated by the 'clerc' in the monastery and if there was a choice between a common word and a scholarly word he chose the latter. La Fontaine on the other hand uses the familiar, often vulgar term. His fable of le Loup, la Chèvre et le Chèvreau has several of these vulgar expressions. They are interesting, aside from the vividness which they give to the fable, for the traces of traditional folk-lore which they show. The word "de guet", foin du Loup et de sa race" and the expression "patte blanche" are found in the folk tales of various parts of France. This fable when compared with the fable in Isopet I illustrates the superiority which La Fontaine's fable gains through his use of expressive terms and of varied rhymes verse form:-

La bique allant remplir sa trainante mamelle,  
Et paître l'herbe nouvelle,  
Ferma sa porte au loquet,  
~~Et dit à son biquet:~~  
Non sans dire à son biquet:  
Gardez-vous, sur votre vie,  
D'ouvrâz, que l'on ne vous die,  
Pour enseigne et mot de guet,  
Foin du Loup et de sa race!  
Comme elle disoit ces mots,  
Le Loup, de fortune, passe:  
Il les recueille à propos,  
Et les garde en sa mémoire.  
La bique, comme on peut croire,  
N'avoit pas vu le gloton.  
Des qu'il la voit partie, il contrefait son ton,  
Et, d'une voix papelarde,  
Il demande qu'on ouvre, en disant, Foin du loup,.  
Et croyant entrer tout d'un coup.  
Le biquet soupçonneux par la fente regarde:  
Montrez-moi patte blanche, ou je n'ouvrâi point,  
S'écrâa-t-il d'abord. Patte blanche est un point  
Chez les loups, comme on sait, rarement en usage.  
Celui-ci, fort surpris d'entendre ce langage,  
Comme il étoit venu s'en retourna chez soi.  
Où seroit le biquet, s'il eût ajouté foi  
Au mot du guet, que, de fortune,  
Notre loup avoit entendu?

The fable in Isopet I is very similar as to action:

La chievre va quérir viande  
Pour son chevrel, et li commande  
Et l'admonestxe que du toit

Ne se meuve, d'ou il estoit:  
 Car s'il s'en part, sache de voir  
 Qu'il y pourra doumage avoir,  
 Et dont il se tiendra pour fos!  
 En l'hostel l'a laissie enclos.  
 Comme il fust demouré sous,  
 Scavez-vous? Ysangrin li loups  
 Hurte a l'huis, boute et appelle,  
 Et change sa voix et chevrelle,  
 Ouvre l'huis, dist-il, a ta mere.  
 Non feray, dist-il, par saint pere,  
 Assés y pourrés appeller:  
 Bien vous connois au chevreller;  
 Tant le sachiez vous contrefaire,  
 N'entreres ja en mon repaire;  
 Et si voi bien par un pertuis  
 Que j'ai ci trouvé en cest huis,  
 Que vous estes ung loup pour voir,  
 Qui me voulés ci decevoir.  
 Ailleurs vous estuet quérir proie.  
 Ainssi le chevrel l'en envoie.

In the Isopet I the fable dou Lyon et dou Rat has an introduction that is interesting because of the short description of nature. ~~xxxx~~ Such description is very rare in the old fables.

Un lion qui las ost esté,  
 Se reposoit un jour d'esté,  
 Pour le grant chaut que il avoit,  
 En un biau lieu foillu et froit.

A similar expression occurs in the Isopet de Lyon:

En .l. bois plaisant pour deduire  
 Dort li lions ~~à~~ sus la verdure.  
 D'environ lui en l'erbe fresche  
 Les rates demoinnent lour tresche.

One of the striking differences between La Fontaine and his predecessors in the middle ages is in his use of meter and rhyme. He varies these in almost every fable. Of the thirty-one which we are considering there is only one of the XVIIth century fabulist's in which the meter is the same throughout; that is the fable of le Rat ~~xxxx~~ de ville et le Rat des champs and it lacks the charm which the fables with varing rhyme have. This fable he has divided into four verse stanzas with the verses rhyming alternately:-

Autrefois le rat de ville  
 Invita le rat des champs,  
 D'une façon fort civile,  
 A des reliefs d'ortolans.

Sur un tapis de Turquie  
 Le couvert se trouva mis.  
 Je laisse à penser la vie  
 Que firent ces deux amis.

Le régal fut fort honnête,  
 Rien ne manquoit au festin;

Mais quelqu'un troubla la fête  
Pendant qu'ils étoient en train.

A la porte de la salle  
Ils entendirent du bruit:  
Le rat de ville détalé;  
Son camarade le suit.

Le bruit cesse, on se retire:  
Rats en campagne aussitôt;  
Et le citadin de dire:  
Achevons tout notre rôt.  
~~Et le rustique de dire:~~  
Ex  
C'est assez; dit le rustique:  
Demain vous viendrez chez moi.  
Ce n'est pas que je me pique  
De tous vos festins de roi:

Mais rien ne m vient m'interrompre;  
Je mange tout à loisir.  
Adieu donc: fi du plaisir  
Que la crainte peut corrompre!

In a fable where the thought is constantly changing from gay to serious, we seem to require a change in the verse form and a change in rhyme. In the fable of les deux Mulets, the meter changes with the action:-

Deux mulets cheminoit l'un d'avoine chargé,  
L'autre portant l'argent de la gabelle.  
Celui-ci, glorieux d'une charge si belle,  
N'eût voulu pour beaucoup en être soulagé.  
Il marchait d'un pas relevé,  
Et faisoit sonner sa sonnette:  
Quand, l'ennemi se présentant,  
Comme il en vouloit à l'argent,  
Sur le mulet du fisc une troupe se jette,  
Le saisit au frein, et ~~l'arrête~~ l'arrête.  
Le mulet, en se défendant,  
Se sent percer de coups: il gémit, il soupire,  
Est-ce donc là, dit-il, ce qu'on m'avoit promis?  
Ce mulet qui me suit du danger se retire;  
Et moi, j'y tombe, et je péris.  
Ami, lui dit son camarade,  
Il n'est pas tousjours bon d'avoir un haut emploi,  
Si tu n'avois servi qu'un meunier, comme moi,  
Tu ne serois pas si malade.

If we compare this fable with the one on the same subject in the Isopet II, we see how monotonous the use of a short verse and alternate rhymes can become:-

Un biau cheval de pris  
Poignoit vers un larris  
Par une estroite sente:  
Un asnes a encontre  
Qui y estoit entré;  
De gaux portait bien trente.



Quant le cheval le vit,  
 De li ot graut despit  
 Et forment se desvoie:  
 Il li dist par ayr:  
 A moy dois obeir  
 Et lesser moi la voie.

Moult ay bien eu grant los  
 Es tournois et es os  
 De maint vaillant baron:  
 Et tu, chetis puans,  
 N'es pas obeissans  
 A ma noble facon.

And continues thus for six more stanzas. The fable written in this way has the effect of a song. It is too symmetrical, we are carried along by the melody and forget the ideas.

The author of this Isopet has paid great attention to the rhyme and meter of his fables. He makes constant use of alternate rhyme, but varies the meter in different fables; we find verses of six syllables in addition to the eight syllable line which is the narrative meter par excellence of the middle ages. He never varies the meter in a single fable, however. The author has divided his poems in various ways, also; sometimes we have quatrains sometimes stanzas of six or eight lines and more rarely an uninterrupted succession of verses.

In the six line stanza the first and second verses, the fourth and fifth rhyme together, while the third rhymes with the sixth. The quatrains have frequently alternate rhymes. In the same fable the writer may use both quatrains and six line stanzas. The fables are very monotonous because of this unvarying rhyme scheme so that when we read the naive statement of the author in the epilogue

Cils qui cest romans fist  
 Moult de sa peine y mist,  
 De quoy il se repent,  
 Car les fols qui l'orrent  
 Communement diront  
 Que il ne vault néant.

we can quite agree with ~~him~~ him about his fables when he says "qu'il ne vault néant."

This Isopet II is the least interesting of the medieval ~~fables~~ Isopets. It is a colorless paraphrase of some Latin collection of fables. The writer has given more attention to his verse and rhyme than to his ideas.

The Isopet I is not nearly so literal translation and many interesting details have crept in. While the verse form is the same throughout, it is the octisyllabic and is not as monotonous as the shorter verses in the Isopet II. The verses rhyme two and two.

The Isopet de Lyon has greater literary value than either of its successors in the fourteenth century. The prologue expresses the favorite idea of the ~~medieval~~ medieval scholars that every piece of literature has two meanings, an exterior, apparent

one and a hidden interior one.

Un petit iardin ai hantey,  
Flours et fruit porte a grant plantey.  
Li Fruiz est bons, la flours nouzele,  
Delitauble, plaisanz et bele.  
Li flours est exemple de fauble,  
Li fruiz doctrine profitauble.  
Bone est la flour por deliter:  
Lou fruit cuil, se uuez profiter.

This writer has thought it useful to try and make "la fleur" of his fable agreeable as well as ~~the~~ "le fruit". The other authors of fables have employed all their talents in making the "morale" interesting and "profitauble". He has felt that the "morale" is not everything; "qu'à coté de la morale, il y a un petit drame qui, séparé de sa compagne, a droit à faire bonne figure. Sur ce drame il a porté toute son attention, et, en dépit de la sécheresse de son modèle, il a réussi à le rendre vivant et animé. Là où le poète latin, en quatre vers, avait placé le loup en face de l'agneau, comme deux mannequins privés de sentiment, notre trouvère humanise les personnages. Il nous montre le loup "de pensée mal saine" et ~~le~~ l'agneau "de simple coraige," qui

Grant paour ai, ne seit qu'il face  
Quar Ysegrins fort le menace. "

One striking difference between these fables of the Isopet de Lyon and the Isopet I and Isopet II is the amount of conversation used in the fables of the Isopet de Lyon. The author seems to have realized that it made his fables more vivid, to put the narration in the form of dialogue. For example if we compare the fable de la Chievre et du Loup of Isopet I (which has been quoted on page 4) with the fable in Isopet de Lyon we can see how much the XIIIth century writer has gained by using direct speeches.

Li chievre s'an vai en porchet,  
Ou burgiz laisse son bouchet.  
Ius a fert a une sarruire  
Qu'est estachiez a fort clouhuire.  
La mere son enfant ensoigne, *Que bien de soi gade se poigne*  
"Beax fils, tenez vos d'une part,  
N'alez pas ioant per lo part;  
Quar tost t'aurait iai fait domaige  
Li lous qui n'ainme ton lignaige."  
Li chevriz toz coi s'est tenuz.  
Pou apres li lous est venuz,  
A l'us coielement tape et bote,  
Petit col fiert de sa grant plote.

There are many more interesting and picturesque words in this fable than in the one in Isopet I. Indeed, throughout this collection there is a greater number of interesting expressions. If the wolf finds a head "moult bien painte et bien portraite" and finds it "despourvue de sanc et de chalour," it is only after having "boutée du pied cop sa, cop la." The story of the raicle qui vestit les pannes dou paon is very entertaining:-

Li raicles trove d'aventure  
D'un bel paon la couverture.  
Mout ere de mirolez pointe

Et de diverses colours tointo.  
-----Quand fu atornez  
Ses compaignons de son lignaige  
Ne doigne voir per son outraige.

-----  
Des paons suet la compaignie,  
Cil conoissent tost ~~en~~ sa folie.  
Entre lour li uns ~~li~~ autre guigne,  
Chescuns s'an truffe et s'an eschigne.  
"Di nous, font il, es tu trouee  
Ceste robe, ou se l'as amblee?"

After the peacocks have stripped him of his borrowed feathers,  
he goes back to his family, but-

Des siens ne atent il pitie,  
Qu'il avoit aincois despitie,-----

-----  
De lui se moquent, de lui rient.  
"Mes sires li paons! ce dient,  
Per coitoisie quar nos dites,  
De vostre robe que feistes?  
A menestrier l'avez donee,  
Espoir, por vostre renommee,"  
Li autre dit: "Mais l'a iuhie  
Li compains par sa druerie."  
L'autre dit: "Mais est en la perche  
Se tu ne m'an croi, si l'encerche."  
Il en vuet faire parement  
Es bons jours por desguisement."  
Uns plus saiges prant la parole,  
Qui parle de moillour escole.  
"Tu fus raicles, or es raclet!  
Mout t'ont ioie de bon eclet  
Cil qui t'ont ta robe tolue;  
Fausement l'avoies vestue.

When we compare anym of these fables of the XIIIth and XIVth  
century~~ies~~ with those of Marie de France who wrote in the XIIth  
one of the most noticeable differences is in style; that of M  
Marie de France is remarakable for its "naïveté". She wrote at  
a time when the language was in its childhood and the simple  
expression was the natural one to use. Moreover, she shows a  
smoothness, lightness and ease in managing her verse form which  
proves that she had true poetic talent. There is a charming sim-  
plicity in this fable de la Soris è de la Renoille":-

Selune la lettre des escriz  
Vus mustrerai d'une Suriz  
Ki par purchaz è par engin,  
Aveit manage en un mulin.  
Par essemple cunter vus vueil,  
C'un jur s'asist desor le sueil,  
Ses grenonez apareilla  
E de ses piez s'espelucha.  
Devant li passa une Raine

Devant li ~~passa~~ une Raine  
 Si cum aventure la maine,  
 Demanda li en sa raisun  
 S'ele ert Dame de la maisun.  
 Dunt ele se feiseit si mestre,  
 Si li acuntast de sun estre.  
 La Suriz li respunt: Amore  
 Pieça k'en ai la seignorie;  
 Bien est en ma subjection,  
 Qant es pertuiz tut environ,  
 Puis herbregier è jur e nuit  
 Joer è fère mun déduit.

And the mouse hospitably asks the frog to stay and dine with her. ~~E~~ "Andeus s'asient sor la pierre, mult i truvèrent à mengier sanz cuntredit è sanz dangier." Then the frog persuades the mouse to go to a valley where they will have better things to eat. "Ensemble od li s'en ert alée, li preiz fu si plains de rousée, ke tute est la Suriz moillée." When they come to a river the frog attaches the mouse to him just as in the other fables and attempts to drown her. But the result is quite different from the others. Marie de France punishes only the ~~guy~~ wicked animal and allows the innocent victim to escape.

La Suriz pipe en halt è crie  
 Ke bien cuideit estre traie;  
 Un Escoufles aleit volant  
 Vit la Soriz si haut pipant,  
 Ses ~~xxxx~~ èles clost, à-vaul descent,  
 Li et la Raine ensamble prent,  
 Andeus furent au fil pendanz.  
 La Raine fu corsue et granz;  
 Li Eschofles par cuveitise  
 La Soriz lait, la Raine ad prise  
 Mengiee l'ad è dévourée  
 E la Suriz est délivrée.

Marie de France uses the eight syllable verse, rhyming two and two. Since there are no variations, it becomes very monotonous, however interesting the thought may be.

The Isopet de Lyon and the two Isopets of the XIVth century resemble the Latin fable much more closely than does the Isopet of Marie de France. To be sure Marie put into French an English translation of the Latin Isopet of Romulus. We have no manuscript of these English fables nor of the Latin collection, which were the original source of the English, and we thus have no means of knowing how much is original in Marie's Isopet. It would seem however ~~in~~ by comparing her fables with her Lais that the thoughts in the "moralites" belong to her; ~~in~~ but that is something we are unable to prove. In any case her fables are very different from the Latin collections of the middle ages. A considerable number of her apologues do not come from Latin sources; some are Oriental stories that have lived in tradition or have come to Europe by way of Byzantium; others are characteristic medieval stories or fabliaux. All are written in a simple, direct manner that interests us in spite of the monotony of the verse. On the whole



Marie de France's Isopet is the most entertaining of the medieval Isopets.

The two French translations of the Isopet of the Anonyme de Nevelet have followed the Latin very closely in the thoughts expressed; but they seemed unable to express an idea in any brief, concise manner. Both of the French translations, the Isopet de Lyon and the Isopet I are very verbose.

There are a few fables in each of these Isopets the Latin source of which are unknown. But there are fewer of Oriental origin in the Isopets of the XIIIth and XIVth centuries than there are in Marie de France.

These scholars of the monastery with their devotion to Latin literature wished to share the pleasure which they found in it and so made translations for the laymen. However, the manners and customs of the Romans ~~xxxxxxx~~ were so different from those of the middle ages that the 'clerics' often misunderstood the Latin. The middle ages had no comprehension of any conditions that were not the same as their own; and thus the idea which the translator puts in his fable is sometimes amusingly changed from the original. He translates 'miles' as 'chevalier' and does not know that any thing different was meant; and similarly with other words that refer to Roman customs.

La Fontaine, too, translated Greek and Latin fables into French. But what a difference! His fables are often as brief and concise as the classic fable; they are never verbose as are the medieval fables. He never gives a long and tiresome 'morale'; the epigrammatic 'morale' is characteristic of his fable. He has given much attention to style and form, which was neglected by the medieval writers.

La Fontaine has done much to make his fable interesting by his use of words. If he has some homely or common thing to describe he does so with the common word and does not hunt for some 'noble' word. "Il faut bien avouer qu'il n'y a pas de synonymes, et quand La Fontaine dit:

Et chacun de tirer le matin, la canaille

A qui mieux mieux; ils firent tous ripaille,

ce dernier mot a quelque chose d'ignoble qui convient à ces pillards gloutons. Mettez à la place: "Ils firent tous festin", - on ne voit plus cette voracité brutale." If a peasant speaks he does not use the language of the court; a merchant and a farmer have different expressions.

In the medieval fable on the other hand, the scholars used the words with which they were familiar in their studies. If there were two words, one common and the other literary, they chose the latter almost invariably. Fortunately the language was still unformed and often the only word which ~~xxx~~ could be used was a word 'vivant, et chargés de sensations' and the fable is interesting to us, seemingly in spite of the author.

These medieval writers lacked the genius which made La Fontaine the 'Enimitable' and lacking that, their fables have a very slight literary value.

## II.

The differences between the fables of these five collections are far more numerous than the resemblances. Men often see the same thing from a point of view entirely different, and ~~as~~ besides this great cause of a divergence between the fables, there are several others. The social position of the writer, <sup>and</sup> his profession, give rise to noticeable variations in the narration of the same action and especially ~~to~~ to differences in the "morale" which the author adds to his fable.

For example *le Lion et le Loup* of La Fontaine shows an inspiration quite different from that of the old fabulists. La Fontaine's fable is a remarkable one in style and action. The two characters are admirably described. But the liberty ~~which~~ of which La Fontaine speaks is not the great sentiment which brings freedom to a nation. His liberty is the sort expressed in the question of the wolf: "Vous ne courez donc pas où vous voulez?" Perhaps for him it means to be free from social bonds.

The characters of the two animals in the fable of La Fontaine and in the old fables are very different. As the ideas of the thing to be pictured have changed, so the characters have ~~changed~~ changed. With the fabulist of the XVIIth century it is not a question of slaves and freemen but of two personnages from the lower ranks of society. "Ce chien, si poli et si gras, n'est ~~qu~~ qu'un domestique de bonne maison, fier de sa livrée; et le loup une sorte de vagabond maigre, hâve, décharné, sans souper." La Fontaine makes us laugh at the expense of this wolf. He is afraid of the dog, he is a glutton, he looks jealously at the fine appearance of the dog and finally he weeps "de tendresse" at the thought of the good things to eat which await him. The wolf approaches the dog "humblement" and endures his patronage.

The fable du Loup qui se veult accompagner au Chien of Isopet I seems very serious after reading La Fontaine's fable. The writer of this old fable must have known what it was to live when liberty was always in peril from some great lord. Here the dog and the wolf speak with each other as friends and equals and the wolf is ready to earn his living by working for it; but as soon as he learns that it must be by giving up his freedom he says:-

-----Ne pris-je deduit  
Et tel aise com je souloie  
Que je, pour mon ventre, serf soie!  
Unls franc povrehoms plus habunde  
Que le plus riches serfs du monde.  
L'homme serf ne puet avoir rien;  
Mais le franc a soi et le sien:  
Franchise est si bonne et si douce.  
Nulle douceur à lui ne touche.

And the old writer adds thirty-six more verses of moralising on the subject of liberty. He criticises those who through cupidity haunt the palace, halls and courts of kings, princes and pope.

Dont doit ~~bien~~ bien hair cils sa panse  
Qui l'ot difame et des avance  
Qui court et fuit isnel le cours

In order to show the value of freedom, this author as well as the writer of the Isopet de Lyon places it under the protection of a religious idea. It is a present from God and one that ~~was~~ <sup>for which</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>paid</sup> by the sacrifice of his Son, payed. x

Almost the same ideas are expressed in the fable of Isopet II when he finds that the dog is not free:-

The writer of the Isopet de Lyon must have felt that liberty is the most precious possession. This fable is the longest with one exception in the collection, and the greater part of it consists of praise of liberty. Of the one-hundred and thirty-three verses in the fable, eighty-one are in praise of ~~the~~ "le bien de franchise."

Li sers chose n'a a lui bone,  
Il n'est sires de sa persone.  
Son seigneur est cors et avoir,  
Riens qui suens soit ne puet avoir.

Franchise est de cuer la viande  
Plus grant solaz cuer ne demande.

"Maldit soit, dit Noe li peres  
Li fil Cham, sers soit de ses freres"



Li droiz deu la vost ~~esprouer~~ esprouer  
 Si come en la loi puis trouer.  
 Li lois de nature et l'escripte  
 Ont donques servituz maldite,  
 Quar pour pechie fust estrovee.

La Fontaine's fable of le Loup et le Chien and Marie de France's on the same subject are very similar. There are the same details and almost the same expressions. La Fontaine says:-

Un loup n'avait que les os et la peau  
 Tant les chiens faisoient bonne garde:  
 Ce loup rencontre un dogue aussi puissant que beau,  
 Gras, poli, qui s'étoit fourvoyé par mégarde,  
 L'attaquer, le mettre en quartiers,  
 Sire loup l'eût fait volontiers:  
 Mais il falloît livrer bataille;  
 Et le matin étoit de taille  
 A se défendre hardiment.  
 Le loup donc l'aborde humblement,  
 Entre en propos, et lui fait compliment  
 Sur son embonpoint qu'il admire.

And Marie de France using almost the same words:-

Uns Leus et uns Chiens s'encuntrentent,  
 Parmi un Bos à il alèrent.  
 Li Leus a le Kien esgardei,  
 E puis si a à lui pallei;  
 Frère, fait-il, mult estes biaux,  
 E mult est luisanz vostre piaus.  
 Li Chienz respunt: c'est veritez,  
 Je menju bien, s'en ai assez;  
 E souef giz quant pluet le jor  
 Par devant les piez mun Segnor,  
 Puis chascun jur runger les os,  
 Dunt je me fas è cras è gros.

Comparing the "morales" of these two fables, we find a striking difference; La Fontaine draws a "morale" from his having a very general application, and not teaching any very noble ethics.

La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure.  
 Marie de France who lived in the time when feudalism was flourishing and saw the effects of "la raison du plus fort" being always "la meilleure," gives a "moralité" having a special lesson for the freeman who for the sake of protection becomes the vassal of some lord.

Par cest essample vus promet  
 Qe cil est mult folx qui se met  
 En sougit o en servitute,  
 Car mauvese est cele constume;  
 Qui a sun talent à delivre  
 Ne laisse en pais nul hume vivre.

Each of the Isopets reflects to a greater or less extent the morals and customs of the time in which they were written. Marie de France describes feudalism. Every "moralité" as she terms the "morale" of her fables, is directed against some evil of her

age: against the seignor, absolute ruler over his dependents; against the unjust judges who sell their justice; against sorcery, trickery, and against the rebellious serf.

Marie de France fights continually against the refusal of justice. She has a whole series of fables directed at the judges who decide in favor of the powerful vassal at the expense of the poor man. There is a deep sadness about these fables for they make us feel so forcibly that the poor man can do nothing. Injustice is meted out to him. The fable dou Leu è de l'Aingniel illustrates this:-

Ce dist dou Leu è dou Aignel  
Qui béveient à un rossel;  
Li Lox à la sorse béveit  
E li Aigniaus à-vaul esteit.  
Irèement parla liLuz  
Ki mult esteit cuntraliuz;  
Par mautalent palla à lui  
Tu m'as, dist-il, fet grant anui,  
Li Aignez li ad respundu:  
Sire! eh quoi dunc? ne veis-tu,  
Tu m'as ci ceste aigue troublée  
N'en puis boivre ma saolée;  
Autresi m'en irai, ce crei  
Cum jeo ving tut murant de sei.  
Li Aigneles adunc respunt:  
Sire, jà bévez vus à-munt,  
De vus me vient kankes j'ai beu;  
Qoi, fist li Lox, maldis me tu.  
L'Aigneax respunt, n'en ai voloir;  
Li Loux li dit: jeo sai de voir,  
Ce méisme me fist tes Père  
A ceste sœurce ù od lui ère.  
Or ad sis mois, si cum jeo crei  
Qu'en retraiez, fait-il, sor mei?  
N'ière pas neiz, si cum jeo ~~xxx~~ cuit;  
E coi pur ce, li ~~xxx~~ Lus a dit  
Jà me fuz tu ore cuntraire  
E chose ke tu ne deiz faire;  
Dunc prist li Lox, l'Engniel petit  
As denz l'estrange, si l'ocist.  
Moralité.

Ci funt li riche Robeur,  
Li Vesconte è li Jugéur,  
De cax k'il unt en lur Justise;  
Fauxe agoison par cuveitise,  
Truevent assez pur ax cunfundre,  
Suvent les funt as Plais semundre;  
La char lur tolent è la pel,  
Si cum li Lox fist à l'Aingniel.

In the very curious fable dou Vilain qui norri une Choë there is another "morale" for those in power to follow in selecting their judges:-

Pur ce ne deit Princes ne Rois

Ses coumudemenz ne ses lois  
A Covoitez mettre en baillie  
Car sa Justise en est perie.

Another apologue, dou Chien è d'une Berbis gives us a picture of medieval conditions among the lower classes:-

C'est essample vus voil mustrer  
De mains Humes le puis pruver  
Ki par mentir è par trichier  
Funt les Povres suvent plédier.  
Faus tesmoignages avant traient,  
De l'avoir as Povres les paient  
Ne leur chaut que li Las deviengne,  
Mais que chascuns sa part en tiengne.

The "morale" of the fable du Chat, du Mulet et de la Souriz gives us another example of the corruption of justice at that time:

Par cest essemble vus devise  
Nus ne se deit mettre en justise  
De celi qui mal li veult fire:  
Returner deit en autre terre.

Again, the fable dou Goupiz è dou Lox has a "morale" for those who administer justice:-

Ainsi deit faire li buns Sire  
Il ne deit pas jugier ne dire  
Se li Hume qui de lui tienent  
Irieement à sa curt viennent  
Ne deit si devers l'un parler  
Qu'à l'autre n'en deie peser,  
Mès adrécier à sun pooir  
E li refaire remanoir.

Every fable of Marie de France has a special application. The five "morales" just quoted are directed against the denial of justice. Another series of the fables try to teach some virtues to the great vassals. Under a government where the land was divided into a large number of estates, each governed by an absolute lord, and having no chief ruler with the power of enforcing his laws, there were bound to be very great injustices. Marie de France saw these around her continually at the court and she preaches against them constantly. For example:-

Autresi est dou mal Siegnur  
Se povres Hum li fet henur  
E puis demant le guerredun  
Jà n'en aura si mangrei nun  
Portant k'il soit en sa baillie  
Mercier le deit de sa vie.

~~1111~~ A comparison of the "morale" of La Fontaine's fable, le

Lion et le Rat with Marie de France's shows the contrast between his general "morale" and her particular one. La Fontaine says:-

Il, faut, autant qu'on peut, obliger tout le monde,  
On a souvent besoin d'un plus petit que soi.  
The "morale" of Marie de France is one of those which give advice to the great vassal:-

Par cest fable nus assoume  
K'exanple i preingnent li Riche Houme  
Qui seur les Povres unt pooir;  
Si lur meffunt par nunsavoir;  
K'il en aient bone merci;  
A venir lur puet autresi  
Ke cil li puet avoir mestier  
E miauz li saura cunseiller  
Au besong s'il est entrepris  
Que li meaudres de ses amis.

The criticisms which she makes of those in power seem very gentle when we consider the evils which they committed. Occasionally, however, we find a threat of vengeance:-

Par méismes ceste resun  
Prenuns essanple dou Luin;  
Quicunques chiet en nun poeir  
S'il pert se force et sun avoir  
Mult le tiennent à grant vilté  
Neis li plusur qui l'unt ame/.

And she does not hesitate to criticise anyone nor even the court at which she lives:-

Ne pot mie od le trichéur  
Li loiauz Huns avoir honur  
En Cort où l'on voille trichier  
E par mesoigne forjugier.

Again in the fable dou Lion Malade et dou Goupil she says:-

De Cort à Roi est enssement  
Tiens y entre légierement  
Meiuz li vaudroit plus loinz ester  
Por les nuvelles escuter.

This last "morale" seems like a personal complaint; but so little is known of the writer that we can<sup>not</sup> be certain of it. We know that she lived at the court of England; but why she did is not known.

The only advice which Marie can give the lower classes injured by all this trickery, injustice and cruelty, is to endure. She teaches the serf silent endurance of his wrongs. While she realizes the evils of feudalism she never even suggests





~~EA~~ Eagle's nest. The "moralité" is:-

Par iceste essample entendun  
K'ensi est dou riche Felun,  
Jà dou Pouvre n'aura merci  
Pur sa plainte, ne pur son cri;  
Mais se cil s'en puet vengier  
Dunc le voit-il asoplier  
Cume fist li Aigliz au Gopilz  
Si cum hum cunte en ces esinz.

She does not mean to teach rebellion by this "moralite"; the whole trend of her advice is as has been said above, toward silent endurance, but not passive endurance if there be any means of securing one's rights.

Since the "Seignour" has such great power and since the happiness and misery of his dependents rests largely with him, they should use great care in selecting their lord. There are six fables the "moralites" of which give advice as to this selection: (1) dou Solaus qui volst Fame prendre, (2) li parlemens des Oiseax por faire Roi, (3) d'un Estanc plain de Reines, (4) de l'Os-tor cui les Coulons eslirent à Segnor, (5) dou Lions qui en autre pais volt converser and (6) d'un Homme qui ne voloit fere Oevre. The "moralité" of the first fable of these six is:-

Ainsi chasteie li plusor  
Ki seur eaus mettent mal Signors;  
Ki ne les deivent esforcier,  
N'a à plus forz d'eaus acompagnier  
Par lur sens, ne par lur avoir,  
Mès desturbier à lur pooir;  
Cum plus est fort e pis lur fait  
Tuz-jurs lur est ~~ferre~~ de mal agait.

The fable dou Lions qui ~~est~~ en autre pais volt converser which is very similar to les ~~Ami~~ Animaux malades de la Peste, has a "moralité" much like the one which has just been quoted:-

Pur ce, li Saiges mustre bien  
Que um ne deit pur nulle rien  
Felun Humme fère Segnur  
Ne traire le à haute honur;  
Jà ne gardera loiauté  
Plus à l'estrange k'au privé  
Si se demeine vers sa gent  
Cum fist li Leuz de sun seirement.

Li Parlemens des Oiseax por faire Roi has this "moralité" on the selection of a "seignur":-

Ensi l'unt fait cum jeo vus di,  
Par cest essample mustre ci  
K'un ne deit pas faire seignur  
De mauvais, ne de gengleur

U il n'a se parole nun;  
 Tel se fait nobles par tencun,  
 E velt menacier è parler  
 Qui moult petit est à douter.

It also shows us an interesting medieval custom; the birds s'as-  
 sanblèrent a Pallement, c'est-a-dire en réunion des premiers  
 membres de l'état. Les assemblées du parlement ainsi nommées,  
 parce qu'on y tratoit des affaires de l'état et non des procès  
 des particuliers datent du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Les parlements étoient  
 ambulatoires; ils se composoient des évêques, des grands officiers  
 de la couronne, des ducs, des comtes, et des barons. Ces assem-  
 blées se tenoient au mois de mars; elles furent abolies par les  
 maires du Palais et ensuite restituées par Pepin-le-gros, père  
 de Charles Martel. Les grands vassaux avoient le pouvoir de créer  
 dans l'étendue de leurs domaines, des parlements qui jugeoient  
 en dernier ressort. - - - - Ce ne fut que sous le règne de ~~le~~  
 Louis IX, qu'on commença à pouvoir rappeler les jugements des  
 hauts barons, qui à cette époque, tués ou ruinés par les croisades  
 - - - - ne pouvoient l'empêcher. - - - - Enfin sous Philippe IV  
 - - - - les assemblées formèrent les états-généraux. Ce fut  
 le 27 mars 1302, que pour la première fois le tiers-état y fut  
 appelé, et que des-lors le parlement devint sédentaire à Paris.

The idea of royal power and of the qualities necessary for  
 a king which is shown in this fable li parlemens des Oiseax por  
 faire Roi is rather curious. They do not ask much of a king.

- - - -Un roi qui soit vaillant  
 Preux et sage et emprenant,  
 Roi doit être moult droiturier  
 Et en justice roide et fier.

The birds consider the cuckoo for king but reject him and elect  
 the eagle for several reasons:-

Li Aigle a bele grandour,  
 Si ert asseiz de grant valour;  
 Moult et saiges et atrempez,  
 Quant d'une foiz est saoulez  
 Bien puet regémuner après  
 Jà de proie n'iert trop engrès,  
 Prince se deit mie reposer  
 Et ne deit mie tuz-~~en~~jures pener  
 Lui ne sun regne travelher  
 Ne la povre gent essiller.

Beneath the vassal in social rank and very slightly above  
 the serf was le Franc-homs. Marie's repeated advice to him is  
 to keep his freedom.

Par ceste Fable munstre ci  
 Que chascuns Frans-Huns face autresi  
 Se nus li veult dunner loier  
 U par promesse ~~en~~ è logengier,  
 Que sun Segnur doie traïr

N' el voille mie cunsentir  
 Atendre en deit tel gueirredon  
 Cum li chiens fist dou Lairon.

Also in the fable of la compaignie dou Chien au Leu:-

Par cest essample vus promet  
 Qe cil est mult folx qui se met  
 En sougit o en servitude,  
 Car mauvèse est cele coustume;  
 Qui a sun talent à délivre  
 Ne laisse en pais nul hume vivre.

But it is the serf who occupies the largest place in these fables and under his own name. "On ne prend pas la peine de le déguiser; il figure sous son vrai nom et sous ses traits parmi les acteurs ordinaires. On dirait qu'il est là en famille, à côté des animaux, un peu plus haut, pas beaucoup plus." There are twenty-two fables in the collection in which the serf occurs as one of the characters. He is so heavily burdened and ~~xxx~~ oppressed that he has become almost an animal himself. It is remarkable that although the serf has so large a place in the fables that he has none at all in the "moralités". We have advice given expressly to the lord and the free-man but nowhere in the "moralités" is the serf mentioned. He seems to ~~near~~ the ~~am~~ animal even for ~~the~~ advice as to his conduct.

The general idea which these fables give us is of the prevalence of evil and wickedness. There is the ~~haughty~~ cruelty and injustice of the vassals and in addition there is a horde of lesser evil doers. For example, this "moralité" to the fable dou Lion, dou Bugle et de un Leu, which is very similar to La Fontaine's la Genisse, la Chèvre, la Brebis en société avec le Lion:-

Autresi est n'en dutez mie;  
 Se Povres hum prent cumpaignie  
 A plus Fort humme k'il ne seit,  
 Jà dou gaaing n'aura espleit;  
 Li Riches volt avoir l'ounur  
 U li Povres perdra s'amur.  
 Se lur gaaig deivent partir  
 Li Riches velt tut retenir.

The fable dou Fevres qui fist une Coingnie which is La Fontaine's la Forêt et le Bucheron has similar advice:-

Tut autresi est du Malvès,  
 Du Felun Humme et de l'Engrès;  
 Qant un Preudons les met avant,  
 E par lui est riche et manant,  
 Se il puet melx faire de lui  
 Tuz-jurs li funt hunte et anui;  
 A celui funt-il tot le pis,  
 Qui plus les a au dessus mis.



"Cette empreinte vivante du moyen-âge, en ses heures les plus tristes, donne un intérêt et un accent tout particuliers à certaines fables qui parlent de violence, du plus faible écrasé par le plus fort. ~~Chez~~ Chez La Fontaine, elles se confondent volontiers avec les autres; ni l'auteur, ni le lecteur ne leur donnent plus d'attention. Ce sont des leçons de morale qui en valent tant d'autres également vraies, également justes, également importantes; mais elles ne vous frappent pas d'une façon extraordinaire. Lues dans le livre de Marie de France avec le sentiment de ce qu'éprouvait l'auteur, dans ce vieux texte dont ~~l'aspect~~ la forme naïve, les sons rudes et encore incultes évoquent devant nous le passé, elles produisent un tout autre effet."

We feel ourselves taken back to this old time which was not always "le bon vieux temps". ~~The~~ The words and expressions suggest the times of chivalry. And back of everything we feel the sorrow of this poet of the XIIth century for all its cruelty. "Nous revoyons le peuple écrasé et meurtri, la foule sacrifiée au petit nombre, le brigandage et l'éternel combat. Une fois ramenés dans ce milieu, ces vieux contes ont un intérêt étrange."

The difference in social conditions of the XIIth and XVIIth centuries has modified the characters of the fables of those two centuries. La Fontaine wrote at a time when the government had become sufficiently well established to assure protection from most of the injustice and evils common in the XIIth century; the fable of the earlier age which is filled with the groanings of those oppressed by a feudal government is therefore very different. There is no apparent attempt to arouse the interest by charm of narration or poetic beauty.

La Fontaine says of his fables :-

C'est une comédie aux cent actes divers.

And we may say of Marie de France's Isopet that it is a drama, with all its dangers, its treacherous actions, its darkness and sadness.

There is one thing that is conspicuously absent in the Isopet of Marie de France when we compare it with the Isopets of the XIIIth and XIVth centuries. That is religious teaching. There are only two fables in Marie's collection which have a "morale" with advice regarding one's relations with God. One, the fable dou Lairon et d'une Sorcière, has a "moralité" directed against one of the evils of the middle ages: the belief in sorcery.

Pur ce chasti-jeu tute gent  
 Qui ne creient Diex leur deffent  
 En aigu ne en sorcherie  
 Qmar trahis est qui si affie.  
 Li cors en est mis à escell,  
 L'arme en vait à grant périll.  
 Geo quit que jamais ci n'aura  
 Qui en sorcerie croira.

The other is the fable de uns riches Hons, and the "moralité" is:-

Li Sages deit resnablement  
Prier a Dieu omnipotent  
Que de lui face sun plaisir;  
De ce li puet grant bien venir.  
Car miex Diex que li estuet,  
Que ses cuers qui cange et muet.

On the other hand the majority of the fables in the Isopet de Lyon and the Isopet I have some religious teaching in the "moralé". The authors of these two Isopets were probably monks and wrote their fables with a didactic purpose. Since it was religious ideas that they were teaching we find their "morales" characterized by the frequency of religious ideas.

If we turn now to the Isopet de Lyon which was written probably a century later than the Isopet of Marie de France, we find a great change in ideas and in the way of expressing them. There are none of the special "morales" so frequent in Marie de France. And there is a remarkable absence of references to social conditions and customs. The writer of this Isopet was apparently a monk and his life in the monastery was so shut off from worldly things that it is natural that his ~~writings~~ fables should contain few references ~~to social conditions~~ to social conditions. Moreover, he translated his Latin original too literally to give us many of the details that make the Isopet of Marie so interesting.

There is nothing definite known of the author of the Isopet de Lyon but there seems to be little doubt that he was a monk; the whole tone of the Isopet suggests a person living away from worldly conditions and interesting himself in thoughts on religious subjects. The prologue which was quoted in the first part of this paper, shows the purpose of the author to teach morals to the laymen.

The writer of the Isopet I was also a monk, but he ~~spent~~ lived at the court and wrote sermons in the form of fables to interest his aristocratic hearers, and seems to avoid giving them lessons that would worry them. The writer of the Isopet de Lyon on the other hand gives no evidences of life at court in his collection and he does not hesitate to give morals the following of which would be difficult. He teaches nobler lessons than the author of Isopet I.

The author of the Isopet de Lyon turns his "morales" very easily into sermons. The fable 'du chien qui porte la piece de char en sa boice' furnished a text for a sermon:-

En vivant ai dou chien la guise,  
Qui s'esperance ou monde ai mise;  
Quar li mondes, ce est une ombre

Qui dou verai bien nos descombre.  
 Qui l'un quiert, ce doiz tu savoir,  
 L'autre ne puet il pas avoir.  
 Ne laisser les choses certaines  
 Por guerre celes qui sont vaines.  
 Tost passe dou mont la figure,  
 Ce dit sainz Pous en l'escripture.  
 Auuec ce pour loi de nature  
 Chose engendre petit dure.  
 Tout retorne a corrupcion,  
 Quanqu'est pour generacion.  
 Ou ciel dois donc, non pas en terre,  
 Chose qui touz iours dure guerre.  
 Ce qui est tuens certainnement,  
 Garde ne perdes folemant.  
 Qui quiert ce qui ne li pertient,  
 Droiz est qu'il perde ce qu'il tient.

The "morale" of the curious fables dou mercheant et de l'asne is also a sermon. The poor donkey is worked and beaten to death and then is not allowed to rest for

Fit li merchanz de la pel faire  
 Cimbales, ou clochates pendent,  
 A tochier des doiz douz sous randent.  
 Et grant tabours que l'on suet batre,  
 Quant l'on essamble por combatre.  
 Ensinc de l'asne morte et vive  
 Fuit en poinne la pel chaitive.

The fable is interpreted in this unusual way:-

Li asnes qu'est sanz connoissance,  
 Ce est arme sanz conscience.  
 Li mercheanz, c'est li deables  
 Qu'est souduanz et decevables.  
 Et cilz mondes, ce est la foire,  
 Ou l'on trove pou de foi voire.  
 Ceste foire son paiement  
 Aura au jour dou iugement,  
 Quant dex les mavaiz punira  
 Et les bons reguierdonera.  
 Li deables l'arme mercheande,  
 Qui sor tout cestui gain demande.  
 Auuec soi vuet que soit dampnee  
 Cele qui dex ai rachetee.  
 A chaitis cors honours autesces  
 Promet et delit et richesses.  
 Certes, ci ai fausse monoie  
 Que cilz merchanz a cors presante.  
 - - - - -  
 Fausse monoie en ha recue,  
 Sa desserte l'en iert rendue.  
 Livree en cert a dampnement,





Sanz porter aiche ne visarme  
Son fil amoinne l'andemain.

The serpent kills both and the author adds this "morale":-

Cil qui une foiz m'a malmis,  
Saiche ne sui pais ses amis.  
Pou me mit sa fause amistie,  
Puis que ie voi sa mavistie.  
Die cil fol ne s'en percoit,  
Se la seconde me decoit.  
En home qu'est de foi muable,  
C'est fiere chose domaiable.  
Qui se repent de sa folie,  
Ie ~~me~~ li perdoins per cortoisie;  
Quar de pardon doit auoir grace  
Cil qui de bon cuer lo porchace.  
Qui unefois m'a volu nuire  
Et puis apres me cuide cuire,  
Li premiers mesfait estimer,  
~~Qu~~ Qu'a secon me vuet venimer.

However, there is a very interesting fable with a lesson in gratitude, the fable dou lion que l'espine naura ou pie. The lion is unable to remove the thorn and meeting a shepherd "son pie li mostre et li deprie que li aidoit per cortoisie." The shepherd removes ~~the~~ the thorn and

Li lions, quar la main li baise,  
La main tot entort a sa boiche,  
En baisant doucement li toiche.  
Li pastres demore en son part,  
Et li lyons de lui se part.  
En son cuer note la samblance  
Dou pastour per grant deligence.  
Grace qu'est bien enracinee  
Ne puet estre tost ebliee.

After several years the lion is captured and taken to Rome "por faire iustise". The shepherd too, has been taken to Rome charged with some misdeed and is put for punishment in the cage of lions. One of ~~the~~ lions is the one that he had helped.

Li lyons reconoit sa face,  
Si lo recoillet doucomant  
Por ce que nuns mal ne li face,  
N'a pas obliee la grace  
Que cil li fist tant bonement.

The lion tells his companions what the shepherd has done for him and they do not harm him.

L'andemain por doner pasture  
vient es lions cil qui les garde,  
De ceste novele aventure  
S'esbahist mout, quant le regarde.  
Esbaie fust la citey~~x~~,

Quant oient ceste veritey.

The lion and the shepherd are set free and:-

Cil examples nos done entendre  
que qui vuet grace recevoir,  
en leu et en tens le doit rendre,  
Non pais son ami decevoir.  
Li communs proverbes te mande  
C' ~~une~~ bonte autre demande.

In all the fables that have just been quoted the changes which the ~~XXXXXX~~ "morale" has undergone in the century between Marie de France and the writer are very noticeable. Marie makes each fable apply to some particular wrong which occurs in the society in which she lives and she goes straight to the point in the fewest possible words. Nowhere is there a "morale" in the Isopet of Marie de France which is long and tedious. Here on the contrary we rarely find one which is not verbose.

We notice the absence of reference to social conditions. There are a few details that have as it were, crept in unnoticed by the author. The pride of ~~the~~ the XIIIth century 'Seignor' is expressed in the fable dou cengler et de l'asne. The donkey says:- "Dex te saut, frere! when he should have said: "Dex vous saut, sire!" and:-

Li ceinglers entent la parole,  
Per matalent la teste en crole,  
Sanz respondre la teste en vire,  
Dedanz soi fremit per grant ire  
S'il n'eust temprey son corroz  
Ja fust li fols asnes derouz,  
Dit li pors: "Ta vie en respit  
Met ie soulemant per despit.  
Nuns iugeroit ce a proesce  
Se ma force voint ta paresce.  
Ma noble dent pas ne demande  
Morsel de si orde viande.  
Dex ne place que si vil chose  
Dedanz ma pance soit enclose.  
Ta vilez est ort de saison,  
Aler t'en puez en ta maison."

There are a few "morales" expressly for ~~the~~ the seignour; the fable dou lion ancien has one .

Folx est qui amis ne procure.  
Mout tost se treive au desoz mis,  
Qui ne est apuiez d'amis.  
Por ce dit l'on :- ~~M~~quez vaut en voie  
Amis que denier en corroie.  
Ou tens de ta prosperitey  
Te soviegne d'aversivey.  
Garde que per ta seignorie  
N

Ne faces autrui vilonie;  
 Quar fortune qui te norrit  
 Et te samble qu'ele te rit,  
 Se sor toi vuet sa main changier,  
 Bien se puet l'on de toi vangier.

The "morale" of tha fable de la berbiz, de la vaiche, de la chievre et dou lyon is so very similar to the "morale" of the same fable in Marie de France's collection that one might think that the author of the Isopet de Lyon knew her fable. The "morale" of the XIIIth century fable ~~x~~ is:-

Cilz exemples bien nos ensoigne,  
 Que nuns a plus fort ne se proigne.  
 Plus fort de lui acompaignier  
 Ne doit nuns hons qui vuet gaignier.  
 De soi ne garde fermety  
 Richesce contre poveretey.  
 Force ne set garder droiture  
 Et richesce n'airme mesure.

Marie de France's "morale" is:-

Einsi est-il n'en dutez mie;  
 Mult s'entremet de grantfolie  
 Q'a plus fort de lui s'acumpaigne;  
 Ni puet faire pas grant gaaigne.

In the XIIIth century riches seem to have been of as much value in securing justice as in the XIIth. With money a somewhat peaceable existence could be secured. Without money, a man was exposed to all manner of wrongs. The fable dou chien et de la ~~ber~~ burbiz is as sad in this Isopet as it is in Marie's. We feel that in this century too, there is great injustice and cruelty. The free-man is in danger of being forced into serfdom. In the fable dou lou, de la berbiz et dou corbeal the author gives four evils which can make even a brave heart fear and one is

Li hons frans que ne soit submise  
 A vil servitut sa franchise.

The poor man may secure his rights by arousing fear:-

Li plus grant per force estriver  
 Lo petit ne doit ne grever.  
 En petit cors git bien grant arme  
 Qui per sent contre lo grant ~~s~~ s'arme.

The larger number of ~~xxxxxxxx~~ ~~xxx~~ the fables, however, have a "morale" expressing some bit of philosophy. There is a serious effort to study the human heart. Cor example:-

Fols est qui a ce s'abandone,  
 Que sa nature ne li done;

Quar communement mal en prant,  
Li faiz soi meisme reprant.  
Cilz qui ne connoit son afaire  
En ce desplait, qu'il cuide plaire.

Or again in the fable des renouilles que demand~~amxxxm~~rent roi:-

Des choses ne set la bontey,  
Qui les ai a sa velontey  
Après chose amere gostee  
Samble estre la bone socree.  
Maingier aincois ce qu'est amer  
Fait puis la douceur miez amer  
Sa vie en grant ioie maintient,  
Qui a cou qu'a lui apertient.  
Qui vuet estrange chose querre,  
Son repos vuet muer en guerre.  
Qui puet estre de franc coraige,  
Ne s'obligoit a mal servaige~~k~~.

The "morale" of ~~xxxxxxx~~ the fable des lieuvres et des renouilles  
is on the subject of fear:-

Cuers qu'est paourous per nature  
Se dote chose qu'est segure.  
- - - - -  
Esperance lo cuer relieve  
Que paour trop soutement grieve.  
Per esperance fort reprise  
Est munte victoire conquise;  
Quar de mort furent en balance  
Mainz que puis salue esperance.

The fable dou lou qui trovai la teste pointe gives us the  
author's opinion of the value of knowledge:-

Sanz la bontey de sapience  
Vaut pou de beautey la semblance.  
Quant li cuer n'a de senz lumiere  
Pou vaut la beaute de la chiere;  
Quar li senz doit ~~em~~ estre ou coraige,  
Qui reluire doit ou visaige.

The writer of this Isopet lived in an age of didacticism  
with a vengeance. It was the same century that the Roman de la  
Rose was written. And several of the collections known as Bes-  
tiaires, Lapidaires and Images du monde all of which are very  
didactic belong to the same age. We have numerous examples of the  
authors didactic intention throughout the collection.

Tu qui ceste fables proposes,  
I puez bien noter quatre choses;  
Tout premiers que hons exilliez  
Ne soit trop segurs ne trop liez.  
Il doit ~~xxxp~~ touz iours estre en regart,  
Metier li fait de tout segart.



Cil qui ont des autres la cure  
 Doivent ovrer per grant mesure.  
 Voillier doivent por porveance,  
 Non pas dormir per negligence.  
 Ne soi n'atruï set consoillier  
 Cuers lenz qui bien ne set voillier  
 Li sers qui autruï bien despensent  
 Dorment, ronchent, que riens ne pansent.  
 Il s'engraissent d'autruï viande,  
 Ce font que la char lour demande.  
 Pitie, mere de cortoisie  
 Ensoigne a faire autruï haie,  
 En cortoisie et en bontey  
 Se deduit noble voluntey.  
 Mais li vilains sers touz enraige,  
 Quant il fait autruï avantaige.

In spite of all the long "morales" in the Isopet de Lyon we do not get as clear a picture of the XIIIth century as we do of the XIIth from the short concise "morales" of Marie de France. From the few glimpses we get of XIIIth century ~~conditions~~, we may conclude that social conditions have not changed much since the time that Marie de France wrote; and from the general characteristics of the two Isopets that the different social position of the two writers has been the cause of the very great differences between their fables. The poet of the XIIth century saw its ~~cr~~ cruelties and sadness and pictured it; the poet of the XIIIth lived away from the world and saw less of the evils of society than his predecessor. Moreover, he translated his model too literally to give us many original ideas.

(C) In the XIVth century there are two Isopets of very distinct characteristics. The Isopet I is much more interesting and gives many more details about the century than the Isopet II. The author of Isopet I was an ~~ecclesiastic~~ ecclesiastic living at the court of John, duke of Normandy. His aim in writing his fables was to teach his aristocratic hearers lessons in morals in an interesting way. He neglects no opportunity to arrive at a pious "morale". From the flattery of the crow by the fox, he draws the "morale":-

Que vaine gloire croist et chasse,  
 Sa perte et sa honte pourchasse:  
 Fausse honneur, se povés entendre,  
 Maint grant anui souvent engendre;  
 Les fos qui quierrent vaine gloire  
 Si vuellent assez honte boire  
 Gloire les met hors de leur san.

And again, in the fable des Lievres qui s'enfuioient, we find a "morale" on the value of hope that seems to have no connection with the fable:-

Esperance a mains a valu:  
 Ainsi elle est voye de salu.

Paoureux sommes sans raison;  
 Cremi si nous donne achoison,  
 De craindre; il estuet que je dise  
 Legierez et couardise  
 Par legiers sommes et couart:  
 Car quiconques craint, si segart,  
 Que il l'esperance n'eschieve;  
 Car sans li est peur trop grieve.  
 Tel ~~x~~ est sauvé par esperance,  
 Qui de morir fust en doutance;  
 Et tieux, sans li, mors, ce m'est vis,,  
 Qui o li fust encores vis.  
 Desesperance l'esbahie  
 Fait homme au diable enlacier,  
 Quant il se tuent par acier,  
 Par fer, par baston ou par corde.  
 C'est la plus perilleuse et orde  
 Qu'est contre debonnaireté  
 De Dieu et sa benignité:  
 Jà pardonnés n'ieit ce pechiez,  
 Qui est de tous meschiez  
 Par li, li dons saint Esperis  
 N'est amés, requis ne cheris.

Another moral lesson is drawn from the fable of the Ant and the Fly:-

Villonie si veult oïr  
 Qui vilonnie dit ou lait.  
 Langue amer homme ou hair fait.  
 Qui biau dit, biau oïr pourra:  
 Biau die, qui dire vourra  
 La langue qui est venimeuse  
 Response n'aura gracieuse.  
 Male langue haine engendre:  
 Nourrit en mour com feu en sendre.  
 - - - - -  
 Se nous croire voulons l'apostre  
 Langue refrainnons qui est nostre;  
 Et se le sage salemon  
 En ce dialegne reclamon,  
 Trouvero ns qui dit: Tres hassens,  
 Hanviens ho mme perescens,  
 Va au fremmi, ce dit mon livre,  
 Qui sceut amasser pour soui vivre;

In this Isopet also, we find an unusual Christian teaching; it is<sup>4</sup> the "morale" of the fable du Renard et de la Segogne:-

Mais au tricheur qui sa foy ~~ment~~ ment  
 Faire doit on semblablement;  
 Sus celi qui fait tricherie  
 Reviengne barat et bordie.

This fabulist was so carried away by his moralizing that he writes "morales" of several hundred verses. There is an unusually long one in the fable des contens du Ventre et des Membres where he seems to try to correct in one sermon all the vices of society.

This writer who lived at the court and probably sought distinction by winning the favor of king, queen and princes does not teach any very elevating doctrine, nor one that is difficult to follow. Thrift, economy, humility, moderation are the favorite virtues with him. His wisdom is very commonplace. There are no high ideals taught; no great sacrifices. The fabulist seeks a comfortable life and does not hesitate to secure by flattery or by any other means the protection of those who can give it. ~~XX~~ In le Chêne et le Roseau, he gives this ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ "morale":-

Quand vois plus fort que moi venir  
Vers qui je ne me puis tenir  
N'ai pas honte de moi baissir.

- - - - -  
Beaux enclins ne me coûtent rien.

And in the fable du Cerf qui besmoit ses jambes, we find a sort of resumé of the author's moral teaching:-

Ne quiers pas toujours ton plaisir,  
Profiter et toy aisier:  
Par ce viendras tu a richesse:  
Ne te tiegne nulle peresce:  
Se tu veuls toujours deliter  
Et toute curation jeter,  
Ne mener la vie delitable,  
Un grand despens et grande table,  
Et tu ni mets atemprement,  
Sois certain et croi fermement,  
Tart re sera du repentir.

- - - - -  
Atrempe toy selon ta rente,  
Que pauvreté ne t'aggravante,  
Et ne t'en fais pas en accroire  
Ne en pompes n'en vaines gloire.  
De l'autrui ne t'en fais si gobes  
N'en viandes ni en belles robes;  
Car ilconvient l'escot paier.  
Pour ce te dois bien esmaier,  
Quant despans plus que n'as assés,  
Ces dis n'oses pas trespasés.

He teaches obedience to those in power:-

Li fors li plus fort traingue et ainc  
Et qui plus fort est, ades vainc.  
Le plus foible doit obeir  
Au plus fort et le conjoir.  
A tous seigneurs, toutes honneurs:  
Les grans redouttent les meneurs.

Il ne fait pas bon courroucher  
Plus grant de lui, ne agoucier;  
Mes doit l'en honorer le prince,  
Soit qu'il oigne ou que il pince.

This collection of fables shows that this fabulist too, sees a great many evils about him. Several ~~xxx~~ fables have a lesson for the evildoers, mostly of the lower classes.

Tout ainsi fait le mauvais hom;  
Achoison sans cause pourchasce  
Comment au preudhomme mefface.  
Qui veult faire division  
De l'ami tost quiert aschoison,  
Met sus à son ami la raige,  
Si com nous tesmoigne le saige.

The cry of the frogs devoured by their king in the fable des Raines qui voudrent avoir Roy, sounds like a real cry; perhaps similar to one that the author has heard many times.

- - - - - Lasses! que nous ferons?  
Aide Dieu, que nous mourons!  
Lasses! nostre roy nous mengue;  
Cy a mal roi qui ses gens tue.

On the whole however, we feel that social conditions are much better. The bourgeois is more independent and more certain of securing his rights. The fable du Singe, du Renart et du Lievre shows the great change that has occurred in enforcing the laws. The people have learned to have some confidence in the protection of royal power against unjust lords. The fable of Marie de France dou Chien è d'une Berbis is in general the same as this one; but in her fable the lamb has no protection at all. This fable du Singe, du Renart et du Lievre is one of the best in the Isopet I. It is interesting in expressions and details.

Devant le singe fist semondre  
Renart le lievre a lui respondre  
D'une gelline grasse et grosse  
Que cil li embla dans la fosse;  
Ainsi dit renart, s'il ne ment.  
Là li lievres contreément  
Respont a ce que il propose  
Que ne li embla nulle chose.  
Et dit ores talent n'en avoit.  
Quant renart ce entant et voit,  
Qui n'a tesmoing qui dier lui doie,  
En jugement son genou ploie,  
Contre le lievre tant son gaige.

This is a characteristic medieval fashion. ~~xx~~ ~~xx~~

Et cil qu'il parla comme saige,  
Se prist courtoisement a dire;



Sauve votre grace, beau sire,  
 Gaige de bataille, en ce cas,  
 Je cuide qu'il n'affiere pas:  
 Car, par l'ordenance royal,  
 S'il n'a presontion loyal,  
 Cheval nen iert ja en selle  
 Contre seli qui est appele;  
 Ou s'il n'i a mehain ou mort,  
 Ou p trahison pour homme mort,  
 Ou s'ossement n'est brisié.  
 Encor tout ce n'est point prisié,  
 Se l'en puet trouver tesmoignage,  
 A donques n'i puet escheoir gage,  
 Si le cas n'est si evidables  
 Que par lui soit uns homs pendables.  
 Tu ne demandes qu'une poule  
 Dont tu voulois fourrer ta goule:  
 Ne valoit que douse deniers,  
 Tournois ou parisis peliers;  
 Or ne doit-on un home pendre,  
 Se la chose ne puet-on vendre  
 Plus de V souls, qui est emblée,  
 Selon commune renommée;  
 Ainsi le tient l'assertion  
 De disieme collation  
 Drois ne veult que pour larrecin  
 Mette l'en personne a la fin,  
 Se n'est larron de renommée  
 Qu'en doit pendre a fourche levée.  
 J'en demande drois a la court.  
 Li juges qui voit bien le hourt,  
 Et la deliauté renart  
 Et cogneust sa guille et son art,  
 Et vit bien par presoncion  
 Qu'il avoit mauvaise accion  
 Si commende que il se taise;  
 Car ila querelle mauvaise.  
 Le lievres met bien ennui  
 Pour ce proposes contre lui.  
 Preudomme est et de bonne vie.  
 De toy maufaire n'a envie  
 Faites pais et bonne accordance.  
 Simplesse si est demonstrance  
 En personne de verité;  
 Et barat vient de fausseté.  
 Hommes qui s'acointe et apresse  
 Mauvaisié, a poine la laisse.

If all the fables in this Isopet were as thoroughly medieval in expressions and customs, we would have a more entertaining collection. There is another fable, *du Renard et du Loup* that also has several interesting details. This fable in the Isopet I shows the influence of the *Roman de Renard*. A fable on

the same subject occurs in the Isopet de Lyon and the resemblance between the two is very close; however there is a difference in their use of names for the animals. The author of the fable in the Isopet de Lyon uses the terms 'voulpil' or 'goupil' and 'loup' throughout. In the Isopet I, the wolf is called 'Sire Esangrin', which is his name in the Roman de Renard. He is "connétable à la cour du lion" which is his function in the Roman. The fox is always Renard and never 'voulpil' as in the earlier fable.

In addition to these two animals as characters in this fable there is a vilein. Here as in the Isopet of Marie he seems to be considered as little better than an animal. In fact, Renard speaks patronizingly to him.

Escoutes moy, dit-il, bovier,  
Et tu en auras tel loyer  
Que le loup ton grant ennemi  
Auras tost a l'ayde de mi  
Je te bailleraï de voir.  
Je vois devant, or viens après;  
Je te le monstreré de près.

The resemblance between these two fables in the Isopet de Lyon and in the Isopet I is as has just been said very close. This is true of the majority of the fables in the collections, for both are translations or rather paraphrases of the same Latin Isopet. Since the "morales" represent in most cases the writers own thoughts, we would expect considerable differences in them. There is almost a century between the two Isopets and the position of the two fabulists was so different, although their aim was similar. However there are several "morales" which are almost identical. For example the "morale" of the fable dou loin ancien in the Isopet de Lyon:-

- - - - - Muez vaut en voie  
Ains que denier en corvoie.  
Ou tens de ta prosperitey  
Te soviegne d'aversitey.  
Garde que per ta seignorie  
Ne faces autrui villonie;  
Quar fortune qui te norrit  
Et te semble qu'ele te rit,  
Se sor toi vuet sa main changier,  
Bien se puet l'on de toi vangier.

And in the Isopet I :-

Bien se gart de ceste aventure  
Cil qui de faire amis n'a cure,  
Et qui, en sa prosperité,  
Ne veult du povre avoir pitié  
Et voudroit bien que l'en eüst  
De li, se ainsy li mescheut.  
- - - - -

La fortune qui est jeient  
Preuve les amis pour nient.

There is such an absence of anything individual in either of these collections that we can not distinguish whether one of the fables is XIIIth or XIVth century unless we know previously to which Isopet it belongs. The complete absence of individual traits is very characteristic of the medieval fable.

There is one fable in the IsopetI which differs from other fables on the same subject in that it has a story to show the practical application of the fable. It is the fable d'un Serpent qui rungoit au dens une Lime. The fable itself is similar in detail to La Fontaine's le Serpent et la Lime and then ~~we have this~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ the fabulist says:-

Je vueil une soutiveté,  
Cy recouter en verité,  
Qu'avint a Paris en tour prime:  
Sceeu fut un fait par une lime.  
Bon compaignon de Picardie  
La menoiert trop bonne vie;  
Quant leur fu faillie pecune  
Et chevance n'eurent ocune,  
L'un deus dedans S. Matherin,  
Se fist porter en @ l'escrin;  
Une lime enclose yot;  
La de l'escrin fu fait depot  
Pour les autres escrins rober,  
Pour eulz reveler et joer:  
Quant il entra en son escrin,  
La lime oblie, et le matin  
L'en rapportent si compaignon:  
Or tost, fait-il or nous baignon  
Et joons en belles estuves,  
En biaux lis et en belles cuves.  
Li frere ne furent pas nice:  
Tantost corans a la justice.  
Tout droit vont a l'official,  
Et li vont conter tout le mal,  
Et li fu la lime baillie.  
Li official lors estodie  
Comment puisse ce fait savoir  
Et le depost emble ravoit:  
Lors apella un garçonnet:  
Va t'en, dit-il, enfansonnet,  
Fois que tu dois a St. Fraubert,  
Tout droit a la place Maubert,  
Et di: Ceste lime vueil vendre:  
Or en puet-on bon marché prendre.  
Plus de trois sol de Parisis  
N'en vouloit prendre li petis:  
Car il li estoit defendu;  
Si ne fu l'instrumens vendu.

Cils qui la fist, moult la blasma,  
 Et mauvais garçon le clama.  
 Et li dit: Tres mauvais soufflet  
 - - -que manuisés de mouflet  
 Façonnée l'ai, par St. Gûeris,  
 Pour II soulz de bon parisis.  
 Veust-tu regaignier a revendre?  
 L'enfançon ne veult plus atendre,  
 Tous raconta au vaillant homme,  
 Et ceci fust une ~~z~~ grant somme  
 Rendue de ce qui est ~~a~~mblé:  
 Car sergent furent asemblé,  
 Prindrent le fevre en sa maison.  
 Sires, fait-il, faites raison;  
 Les escoliers vous monstreré,  
 Si delivres estre devré,  
 Qui ma lime ont achetée;  
 S'en faites ce qui vous agrée.  
 Li fait fust connu pour notoire:  
 Li official en ~~ot~~ grant gloire.

There is ~~is~~ not much connection between the ~~xxx~~ story and the fable but the writer seems to have taken much pleasure in telling it. It is somewhat difficult to understand ~~paris~~ in parts but gives an interesting picture of a phase of life in Paris in the XIVth century.

This collection of fables is less poetical than the Isopet of Marie de France; on the whole the XIVth century is less poetical than the XIIth or even the XIIIth. The unquestioning faith in the Church and the beautiful sentiments of chivalry in its prime are lost in the XIVth. century. The nobility has been lowered and the middle classes have not elevated themselves. The whole tone of the Isopet I is exceedingly common and vulgar. There are almost no noble sentiments expressed.

D This same thing is true of the other Isopet of ~~xxx~~ the XIVth century, the Isopet II. This collection is the least interesting of the medieval Isopets. It is probably a translation of the Latin fables of Alexandre Neckam, an English writer who died in 1215. Nothing at all is known of the author of the Isopet II and his fables show even less of individuality than do the other Isopets; consequently, little can ~~be~~ be conjectured about him.

The "morales" throughout the collection are short; there are very few which are longer than a six verse stanza. <sup>14</sup> In this it differs greatly from the Isopet I and the Isopet de Lyon. The "morale" is often pious as for example in the fable comment le Paon se courrouce de ce qu'il ne chante comme faist le Rossignol:-

Celi qui a envie  
 D'autrui, fait grant folie,  
 Et si, vit a douleur:



Tout doit à chascun plaire  
Que Jesu Ghrist veut faire,  
Qui est vrai createur.

Les riches conteront  
Des biens qu'il aront  
En ce siecle conquis.  
Cil qui petit ara,  
De petit contera  
Au Roy de paradis.

Qui vit en povreté,  
Sans point d'iniquité,  
Moult ara grant richesse  
Es cieux en paradis,  
O dieux et ses amis,  
Seront joyeux et aise.

Sometimes the teaching in the "morale" is very remarkable as in the fable de II compaignons dont l'un ot grans dons pour menter et l'autre mourut pour voir dire. The two 'bachelers' are told by the king of the monkeys to tell their true opinion. The first one says:-

Sire, il n'a roy en terre  
Qui péust tenir guerre  
A vous ne a vos gens  
Vous estes plus puissans  
Et bel et avenans  
Et plus c'un autres gens.

Vostre chevalerie  
Est de biauté garnie  
De bonté et de sens.  
Chascuns a courtoisie  
En son cuer herbergie  
Qui maindra a tous temps.

And he receives great rewards. The second tells the truth and is killed. This is the ~~Mora~~ "morale" which the fabulist gives:-

Mentir pour gré avoir  
Vault miex que dire voir  
Et perdre corps et vie.  
Voir dire sans damage  
Devroit tout homme sage:  
Car mentir est folie.

There are several "morales" showing observation of human nature and a beginning of philosophic thought. The fable comment le Leu trouve un Asne qui gisoit en l'prè dolant et met aigné et li Leus qui le voloit mangier ot grant pitié de li pour la povreté qu'il avoit; si li laisser aler, has this "morale":-

Se ~~un~~ un hom desloyal  
Se repentoit du mal  
Qu'avoit fait en sa vie,  
Tout le bien qu'il feroit  
Des gens tenusseroit  
Mal et ypocrisie.

Chascuns se doit garnir  
En son premier venir  
De bien faire et savoir:  
Homs de mauvais renom,  
Traître ne larron  
Ne pot honour avoir.

One of the fables in the Isopet has a very ironical description of a serf. It is ~~in~~ the fable comment l gant vilain Pelé fiert de sa main une Mouche qui le mort sus sa teste et l'ataine mout forment.

Un grant vilain pelé  
Gras et bien saoulé,  
S'assist en sa maisom  
Un haterel devant.  
L'ala souvent poignant,  
Ou vibet ou taon.

Un cop jeta en vain  
Le vilain de sa main  
Sur sa teste pelée;  
Malement ce bleça,  
La mouche n'atoucha  
Dont point ne li agré.

La mouche se traverse  
Poignant fust et diverse,  
C'estoit contre la mort;  
Le vilain aticha  
Et il se courrouça  
Et li dit qu'il a tort.

Il la cuida ferir;  
Mais il sot bien fouir  
Et grunchier, en volant.  
Une très grand paumée  
S'est le vilain donnée  
Au haterel devant.

Il en jeta un ~~exx~~ ris;  
Il jura saint Denis,  
Que tant i ruera  
Qu'en aucune maniere,  
Ou devant ou derriere,  
A ferme l'atteindra.

Il l'atteint sur sa tête,  
 Si n'en fist pas grand fête:  
 Ains ferit en seursaut.  
 Toute l'a ecachée:  
 La teste en fust soillée  
 Dessus le front en haut.

This is the most complete description of a serf that is given in any of the fables; but from the suggestions that occur in various fables in each of the Isopets, he seems to have been very much the same in the three centuries. However if we go to the fables of the XVIIth century and notice the peasants, ~~xxx~~ in La Fontaine's fables we find that considerable changes have been brought about. But, ~~xxx xxx~~ in spite of changes in social conditions the serf of the XIIth and the peasant of the XVIIth century resemble in character.

### Conclusions.

In comparing these five collections of fables, the four Isopets of the middle ages fall naturally into one group in contrast with La Fontaine's fables. Especially is this true if we compare the "morales". The medieval poems give "morales" for certain classes of people living under certain social conditions, while La Fontaine gives a system of philosophy for mankind in any age or in any place. Like his great contemporary, Molière, he describes humanity and attempts to depict the customs and characteristics of men and to reproduce a picture of human life. And he teaches through this representation of human life a philosophy similar to Molière's. "Il n'y a pas à nier que la morale qu'on peut ~~xxx~~ tirer des Fables - - - est une morale épicurienne. L'idéal du poète est un idéal de vie facile, naturelle, instinctive,"

In the medieval fable on the other hand, while the philosophic thought in the "morale" is often general the application is to the peculiar conditions existing at that time. The teachings are expressly for certain classes of society of the XIIth, XIIIth and XIVth centuries. In these fables man is not considered in his individual character but in his relations with other men. Since these relations were usually in war or in some struggle against injustice, we have a majority of the fables treating these subjects. This is especially true of the Isopet of Marie de France. In the XIIIth and XIVth centuries the government was more firmly established and there was some protection given by the laws. ~~The~~ The scholar had time to think of man as an individual and to ~~xx~~ think of his moral development.

The mania for moralizing became prevalent and as the fable offered a special field for it, we have very long "morales". Each fabulist strove to display ingenuity in the interpretation of his allegory. Since the writers of the Isopets, excepting Marie de France, were monks they almost invariably turn their

allegory so as to explain some religious teaching. One of the best examples of this is in the "morale" of the fable des contents du Ventre et des Membres. The Isopet I has a long sermon on the two verses

Que ce que un chascun plus aime  
C'est son dieu que souvent reclaime.

Since this interest in allegories was especially great among the "clerics" in the monasteries, it is natural that the Isopets by the monks should contain so many while the Isopet by Marie de France has none. She gives her "morale" in as few words as she can and never tries to make it fit some religious idea.

The number of religious "morales" in the ~~fixe~~ collections differs greatly. As has just been said Marie de France says almost nothing about religion. The Isopet de Lyon and the Isopet I turn the greater number of their "morales" into sermons on some religious ~~in~~ duty. Their aim is to teach the doctrines of their Church and it is natural that they should make their "morales" religious in tone. The Isopet II does not have as many long Bmorales" ~~xx~~ but the majority of them are interpreted to explain some biblical teaching. La Fontaine leaves the religious element out of his fables. The philosophy which he teaches is not Christian; he would have man follow his instincts. The difference in character and aim of these fabulists has caused this divergence.

The ethics which the different authors teach in their fables vary greatly. Marie de France has ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ concerned herself with hierarchical duties; she gives a "morale" for those living under a feudal government; the duties of suzerain to vassal; of vassal to suzerain; of serf to lord and of lord to serf. The "morale" is divided like everything else in the middle ages and well labeled so that each may follow the teaching that belongs to his own class. She advises obedience to the superior and through the entire Isopet never expresses a revolutionary sentiment. We do not find ~~anyxxxx~~ any "de ces malices sociales, de ces gaites qu'on rencontre sans cesse dans La Fontaine, cette soumission narquoise à l'autorité qui devance de peu la révolte." Those who are oppressed can do nothing but endure in silence. She gives "morales" directed against the refusal of justice and the petty rascality which is so common.

The ethics taught by the Isopets are with some limitations Christian ethics. The "morale" here is for certain classes also, but is much less restricted and less individual than in Marie. Occasionally there is an unusual teaching as the one mentioned in discussing the fable du Renard et de la Segogne of the Isopet I where revenge is taught. Unquestioning obedience to those in power is preached; and those in power are told to show kindness to their dedendents.

In very few of the fables, however do we find teachings



allegory so as to explain some religious teaching. One of the best examples of this is in the "morale" of the fable des contents du Ventre et des Membres. The Isopet I has a long sermon on the two verses-

Que ce que un chascun plus aime  
C'est son dieu que souvent reclaime.

Since this interest in allegories was especially great among the ~~xxxxxx~~ "clerics" in the monasteries, it is natural that the Isopets by the monks should contain so many while the Isopet by Marie de France has none. She gives her "morale" in as few words as she can and never tries to make it fit some religious idea.

The number of religious "morales" in the five collections differs greatly. As has just been said Marie de France says almost nothing about religion. The Isopet de Lyon and the Isopet I turn the greater number of their "morales" into sermons on some religious duty. Their aim is to teach the doctrines of their Church and it is natural that they should make their "morales" religious in tone. The Isopet II does not have as many long "morales" but the majority of them are also interpreted to explain some biblical teaching. La Fontaine leaves the religious element out of his fables. The philosophy he teaches is not Christian; he would have man follow his instincts. The difference in character and aim of these ~~xxxxxx~~ fabulists has caused this divergence.

The ethics which the different authors teach in their fables ~~xxx xxx~~ ~~diffxxxx~~ vary greatly. Marie de France has concerned herself with hierarchical duties; she gives a "morale" for those living under a feudal government; the duties of suzerain to vassal and of vassal to suzerain; of serf to lord and of lord to serf. The "morale" is divided like everything else in the ~~x~~ middle ages and well labeled so that each may follow the teaching that belongs to his own class. She advises obedience to the ~~sup~~ superior and through the entire Isopet never expresses a revolutionary sentiment. We do not find any "de ces malices sociales, de ces gaîtés qu'on rencontre sans cesse dans La Fontaine, cette soumission narquoise à l'autorité qui devance de peu la révolte." Those who are oppressed can do nothing but endure in silence. She gives "morales" directed against the refusal of justice and the petty rascality which is so common.

The ethics taught by the Isopets are with some limitations Christian ethics. The "morale" here is for certain classes also, but is much less restricted and less individual than in Marie. Occasionally there is an unusual teaching as the one mentioned in discussing the fable du Renard et de la Segogne of the Isopet I where revenge is taught. Unquestioning obedience to those in power is preached; and those in power are told to show kindness to their dependents.

In very few of the fables, however do we find teachings

University of Toronto Libraries



3 3838 100532047